JEFFERSON AND/OR MUSSOLINI

EZRA POUND

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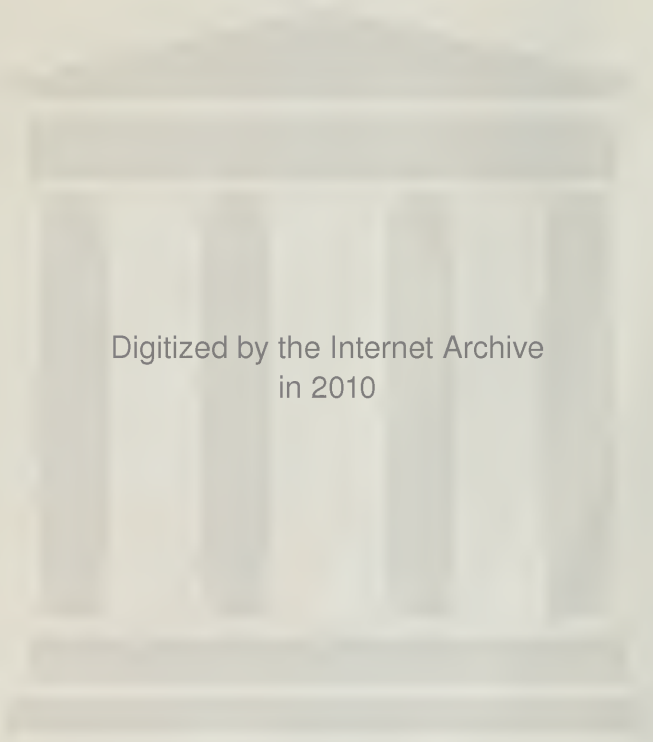

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JEFFERSON AND/OR MUSSOLINI

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JEFFERSON

AND/OR

MUSSOLINI

L'IDEA STATALE

FASCISM AS I HAVE SEEN IT

BY

EZRA POUND

Volitionist Economics

LIVERIGHT

NEW YORK

APRIL 1935, ANNO XIII, FINALLY A FOREWORD

THE BODY OF THIS MS. WAS WRITTEN AND LEFT MY HANDS IN FEBRUARY 1933. 40 PUBLISHERS HAVE REFUSED IT. NO TYPESCRIPT OF MINE HAS BEEN READ BY SO MANY PEOPLE OR BROUGHT ME A MORE INTERESTING CORRESPONDENCE. IT IS HERE PRINTED VERBATIM, UNALTERED. I HAD NOT SEEN THE MS. FROM THE TIME IT LEFT RAPALLO TILL IT RETURNED HERE WITH THE GALLEY PROOF. IT IS PRINTED AS RECORD OF WHAT I SAW IN FEBRUARY 1933. THE SEPTEMBER PREFACE (1933) INDICATED A FLUTTER OF HOPE, THAT HAS GROWN STEADILY MORE FLUTTERY AND LESS HOPEFUL.

E.P., RAPALLO, APRIL, XIII.

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1935

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NOTHING IS WITHOUT EFFICIENT CAUSE

LETTER SENT AUTUMN, 1934, BY EZRA POUND TO EDITOR OF THE CRITERION, LONDON

I

ONE element of the Duce's gamut is the continual gentle diatribe against all that is "anti-storico," all that is against historic process.

Obviously a parliamentary system which is in Italy an exotic, a XIXth century fad, imported *ad hoc*, for temporal reason, a doctrinaires' game in North Italy, a diplomatic accident in the South, is *not* in the blood and bone of Italians.

Vittorio Emanuele had reasons, and even necessities of state pushing him to it, at least as top dressing.

What it signified *de facto* in Turin, is best exemplified by the specific occasion on which a Piedmontese parliament refused to sign on the dotted line of a treaty. Victor told the people to elect another that would.

The system went into effect in Naples to avoid technical terms in a treaty with Austria.

Given a little time and leisure (XII years) Mussolini emerges with a scheme for ascertaining the will of the people that will be at least in intention more efficient than elected politicians, divided by geographical districts. He wants a council where *every kind* of man will be represented by some bloke of his own profession, by some deputy who has identical interests and a direct knowledge of the needs and temptations of a given profession.

Mussolini has never asked nations with a different historical fibre to adopt the cupolas and gables of fascism. Put him in England and he would drive his roots back into the Witanagemot as firmly as Douglas.

The blackest lie in autumn (1934) propaganda is the lie of re-employment, considered as possible.

Even the technocrats years ago, showed that re-employment at anything like the old hours per day is impossible.

Human decency demands the division of work among a great number of people, rather than having it piled onto a few.

The economist is faced with a progressively diminishing need of human labour.

If they are honest one wonders why the London Gesellites should be touting re-employment in their Sunday propaganda.

Gesell had a very clear brain wave, and offered that rarest

of all possible things an innovation in economics. It is surprising to find his more vocal disciples still clinging to what should be a very dead superstition.

We do *not* continue to hoist water with a bucket from the garden or village well, after we have laid on modern plumbing.

The atrophy which conceals this fact from economic and political organizations is not one which I can explain.

There is printed proof of its existence, and I therefore suppose a cause for it exists.

Similar phenomenon presented by a professor from London's renowned School of Economics: the bloke went to France but was unable to decipher the inscription on the Chamber of Commerce coinage.

So I suppose his students still remain sheltered from the distressin' fact that France has two kinds of money, one for home use and one good both at home and abroad.

This topic is curiously unwelcome to members of the London Chamber of Commerce, for reasons which remain (at least to the present author) obscure.

The ends obtainable by adumbration or suffocation of facts are hardly the ends of science however much they may contribute to the hazards of politics.

To the scientist facts are desirable, the scientist wants as many as possible, he wants to know what's what and what of it.

He doesn't necessarily want to use all known data in a given instant of time, but neither does he wish to proceed on the assumption that what is not, is; or vice versa.

It is not from our biologists, or chemists that we hear the admonition: "Don't give him an idea, he has one." Perhaps this is why so many nice people still think economics is not, and won't soon be a science.

II

I list another curious case, that of a skilled accountant, conversant with algebra, who has by that latter exercise somewhat dimmed his sense of causality.

You can transpose terms in an algebraic equation whereas you can not by analogy transpose the different parts of a bridge.

We need, we some of us painfully need, a pooling of all these available knowledges; of all the rigidly zoned rare fruit of particular kinds of experience. I want all this accountant's knowledge, or as much of it as I can get under my beret.

I recognize brother Warburg's acuteness when he observes or repeats that silver is mainly a by-product of other metallic production. When he tells me that the man who buys a plough

commits the same act as the buyer of mortgages, I pity the pore lonely banker.

III

Trade Balance: a hoax whereby the government concealing a huge part of the national income assures the people the nation has spent more than it's got.

"Control of credit and control of the news are concentric," writes Chas. Furguson. A book I wrote in Feb. 1933 is still unprinted. I console myself with the fact that Van Buren wrote his memoirs in the 1860's and they got into print only in 1920. Control of credit seems in that case to have delayed quite a lot of news about bank method.

On Oct. 6th of the year current (anno XII) between 4 P.M. and 4-30 Mussolini speaking very clearly four or five words at a time, with a pause, quite a long pause, between phrases, to let it sink in, told 40 million Italians together with auditors in the U.S.A. and the Argentine that the problem of production was solved, and that they could now turn their minds to distribution.

It is just as well that such statements should have reached the general public.

Distribution is effected by means of small bits of paper, many of those bearing one, two and three numerals are for convenience sake carefully engraved, and are (apart from series number) exact replicas of each other as far as human skill can encompass.

Other bits are part printed and partly filled in by hand.

The science of distribution will progress in measure as people give more attention to these bits of paper, what they are, how they come there, and who governs their creation and transit.

I fail most lamentably at ten and five year intervals precisely when I attempt to say something of major interest or importance. Trifles or ideas of third or second line, I can always offer in manner acceptable to my editors. The book I wrote in Feb. 1933 continues to fall out of date, to recede as its statements are verified by events.

By Oct. 6, 1934 we find Mussolini putting the dots on the "i's."

That is to say, finding the unassailable formula, the exact equation for what had been sketchy and impressionistic and exaggerated in Thos. Jefferson's time and expression.

By last April Quirino Capaccioli [1] had already got to a vision of the day when the state could sit back and do nothing. Which sounds again, rather like Jefferson.

[1] *Cenni Sullo Stato Corporativo Fascista* (Firenze Stablimento Graf. Commerciale, Via Cimarosa 10. Lire 5).

OCT. 6TH	OBIT	4-14 P.M.

Dead, at 4-14 in the Piazza del Duomo, Milano, anno XII. Scarcity Economics died.

Scarcity Economics being that congeries of theories based on an earlier state of human productive capacity. Lest the Duce's Italian have been translated only into set formal phrases it might be well to look at his meaning, and to remember that for XII years the Duce has kept his word whereas it is almost impossible to find a public man in any other country, European or American whose promises are worth yesterday's newspaper.

Lavoro Garantito, that means that no man in Italy is to have any anxiety about finding a job.

Le Possibilità della richezza, is plural, "science has multiplied the means of producing plenty, and science prodded on by the will of the State should solve the other probem, that of distributing the abundance, and putting an end to the brutal paradox of grinding poverty amid plenty."

The will of some states, personified by freshwater professors or fattened bureaucracies might offer a fairly lean hope, but in this case the Stato is sufficiently re-inforced by the human fact of the Duce, who has defined the state as the spirit of the people.

"The indifferent have never made history."

End of poverty in the Italian peninsula. Distribution is effected by little pieces of paper.

The Duce did not call on his hearers for either more knowledge or more intelligence, he asked for "*energie e volontà*" (both in the plural).

"Self-discipline not only of entrepreneurs but of workmen," with a correction of all that is vague and impressionistic in Jefferson's phrasing "equality in respect to work and to the nation. Difference only in the grade and fullness of individual responsibility."

Thus plugging the leak left in all democratic pronouncements.

The more one examines the Milan Speech the more one is reminded of Brancusi, the stone blocks from which no error emerges, from whatever angle one look at them.

Lily-liver'd letterati might very well exercise their perception of style on this oration.

Just payment, and *la casa decorosa*, that means to say adequate wages (or perhaps *salario* doesn't rule out the more recent proposals for distributing exchangeable paper). *Decorosa* means more than a house fit to live in, it means a house fit to look at.

The Duce who never tries to put in a wedge butt end for-

ward, began this campaign some months ago with the mild statement that in 80 years every peasant should have a house of this kind, or rather he said then "clean and decent."

I don't the least think he expects to take 80 years at it, but he is not given to overstatement.

He must know already what means of distribution exist. Mere plenty is too easy, and the equation of "silk hat and Bradford millionaire" too unpleasant. Purist economists who see the problem as mere algebra, mere bookkeeping, or even mere engineering, will continue to see Italy in a fog. The idea of "nation," the heap big magic of evoking the Urbs Augusta, the Latin numen is too far from 19th century prose, from Sam Smiles, from finance in general. It is possible the Capo del Governo wants to go slow enough so as not to see, in his old age, an Italy full of fat peasants gone rotten and a bourgeoisie stinking over the peninsula as Flaubert saw them stinking through Paris. All this is poesy and has no place in a critical epistle.

This statement will irritate a number of doctrinaire readers, and I hope to continue the process until they can show me at least one other country in which *any* honest economic legislation occurs, and in which any or either of the plans for a decent monetary system show any signs of leaving the somewhat airy field of suggestion and taking on legal and concrete existence.

EZRA POUND.

The Criterion. London, January, 1935.

SEPTEMBER PREFACE

THIS book was written in February (anno XI) when almost nobody "saw Roosevelt coming." Certainly no letter reached me from America showing any sign of the break. I enquired. A very well-known American editor (call him Ole H.) replied: "A weak sister."

Only when I got to Paris in June could I find a trace of anyone's having foreseen. Hickok of the *Brooklyn Eagle* had had only one tip before March: "Young Vanderbilt" had passed through Paris. He had worked in the Roosevelt campaign and reported that "people didn't know what was coming." Roosevelt was alive, had political talent, read, knew. Vanderbilt and another chap were out West reporting local opinion, "never succeeded in reporting anything R. didn't already know. Must have read their reports. Would send in word from say Seattle

and get reply: 'Don't that contradict what you wrote on the 14th from Des Moines.' R's habit to lie in bed in the morning with papers spread all over the bed, makes as good a desk as . . . etc. . . ."

Certain men have died and I am heartily glad of it, certain men still live whose death would contribute to my pleasure or at least to a certain mental satisfaction, I mean, such as when the street watering-cart sluices off a certain amount of debris; a few others do, thank heaven, appear less frequently in the papers whose abysmal policies, distortions and perfidies have done their utmost to retard the race.

Recommending the book to a British public I could say, read it in relation to what has happened since 4th March, 1933, in the U.S.A. and you may get some faint inkling of what to expect from our country. I don't know that this recommendation is wholly useless even in addressing a great part of the American public. Many of them have apparently never heard of stamp-script, of Woergl, of C. H. Douglas, though several new reviews seem busy trying to tell them.

Many of them, perhaps one might say most of 'em have been very much surprised by Mr. Roosevelt, and it might do them no harm to try to "place" F.D.R. *in relation* to contemporary phenomena in other countries.

Ezra Pound.

Note: As I write this 18th September, anno XI, there is NO American daily paper contemporary with the F. D. Roosevelt administration, there are several papers *favourable* to the administration, but that is not the same thing. There are a couple of weekly and quarterly publications showing some adumbration of contemporary thought, there is a projected weekly said to be about to be going to be affected by an ex-member of the "brain trust," * there are lots of old-time bright snappy practical go-getting journalists still worrying about *idées fixes* of their grandfathers' time and wholly unconscious of what is occurring about them, or if not unconscious merely muddled and incomprehending. I have never quarrelled with people when their deductions have been based on fact, I have quarreled when they were based on ignorance, and my only arguments for 25 years have been the dragging up of facts, either of literature or of history. Journalism as I see it is history of to-day, and literature is journalism that *stays* news.

A.D. 1933

* Today. Edited by Raymond Moley.

I

JEFFERSON AND/OR MUSSOLINI

THE fundamental likenesses between these two men are probably greater than their differences. I am not diddling about with a paradox. The top dressing could hardly be more different, everything on the surface is different. The verbal manifestations or at least the more greatly advertised verbal manifestations undoubtedly differ to a very great degree.

"The best government is that which governs least," remarked Mr. Jefferson. I don't propose to limit my analysis to what Tom Jefferson *said*. I don't propose to limit my analysis to what Tom Jefferson recommended *in a particular time and place*. I am concerned with what he actually did, with the way his mind worked both when faced with a particular problem *in* a particular geography, and when faced with the unending problem of CHANGE.

If Mussolini had tried to fool himself into finding or into trying to find the identical solution for Italy 1922–1932 that Jefferson found for America 1776–1826, there would have been no fascist decennio.

There is probably no language simple enough and clear enough to explain this, to make this clear to the American extreme left and to the American liberal. I mean to say that the left is completely,

I mean completely, absolutely, utterly, and possibly incurably, ignorant of Jefferson and nearly ignorant of the structure of American government, both *de jure* and *de facto*.

They understand nothing of this subject because they have no desire to understand it, and practically all political parties are swallowed up in the desire for mutual ignorance of their reciprocal difference.

Jefferson's writings are published in ten volumes but I know of no cheap popular edition of selected and significant passages. Van Buren's autobiography was kept in manuscript up till 1920, not, I imagine, because of a vile conspiracy of bogey-men bankers but simply because the professors of history and economics were too lazy and too ignorant to understand its importance. The final hundred pages would have saved America twenty years' trouble had they been printed in 1900. Instead of which our daddies had General Grant. And we have ourselves been spectators, disgusted in the main, of the undignified procession: Wilson, Harding, Coolidge and Hoover.

The heritage of Jefferson, Quincy Adams, old John Adams, Jackson, Van Buren is HERE, NOW *in the Italian peninsula* at the beginning of fascist second decennio, not in Massachusetts or Delaware.

To understand this we must have at least a rudimentary knowledge of the first fifty years of United States history AND some first-hand knowledge of Italy 1922–33 or 1915–33, or still better some knowledge of 160 years of American democracy and of Italy for as long as you like.

The man least likely, I mean the man in all Europe or in all America least likely, to be surprised

at my opening proposition is Benito Mussolini himself.

The popular pictures or caricatures of Jefferson are forgotten. Mr. Ludwig has done a, shall we say, popular picture of the Duce, or shall we say a picture that has been widely distributed. Mr. Ludwig saw in Mussolini exactly what one would expect Mr. Ludwig to see. It is a wonder he didn't ask the Capo del Governo how much he paid for his neckties. I once knew a traveller in smokers' novelties, very very like Mr. Ludwig in mind and manner. I dare say he also would have been distressed by the Duce, for I cannot at the moment recall (amid all the photos and all the cinema newsreels) I cannot recall any photo of the Duce smoking a fat cigar.

I think Emil would have been just as happy talking to Lloyd George or Woodrow, or to those who have afflicted our era and by whom our public affairs have been messed up.

I have myself seen several statesmen, mostly ignorant and, if not ignorant, either shallow or shifty, all engaged in passing the buck, or in avoiding the question, i.e. ANY question whatsoever.

II

JEFFERSON

JEFFERSON participated in one revolution, he " informed it " both in the sense of shaping it from the inside and of educating it.

He tried to educate another. It wasn't technically and officially his business as American Ambassador to France, but being Jefferson he couldn't exactly help himself. While fat Louis was chewing apples at Versailles, Lafayette and Co. kept running down to Tom's lodgings to find out how they ought to behave, and how one should have a French revolution. The royal bed or whatever they called it was toppled over and T.J. went back to the States. He was the recognized opposition for twelve years while Hamilton and his pals were engaged in betraying the people, betraying them honestly, sincerely with a firm conviction that it was their duty to make the thirteen colonies into the closest possible imitation of Britain.

The handiest guide to this period is Woodward's *Washington, Image and Man.*

After that, Jefferson governed our forefathers for twenty-four years, and you might almost say he governed for forty-eight. There was the slight cross-current of Quincy Adams, but there was the intensively Jeffersonian drive of Van Buren.

When I say twenty-four years I count Jefferson's

eight years as President and the sixteen wherein he governed more or less through deputies, Madison and Monroe.

" The best government is that which governs least." Shallow interpretation puts all the emphasis on the adverb " least " and slides gaily over the verb " to govern."

Apart from conversation and persiflage, how did Jefferson govern? What did he really *do*? Through what mechanisms did he act?

He governed with a limited suffrage, and by means of conversation with his more intelligent friends. Or rather he guided a limited electorate by what he wrote and said more or less privately.

He canalized American thought by means of his verbal manifestations, and in these manifestations he appeared at times to exaggerate.

The exaggeration had an aim and a scope, temporary and immediate. No man in history had ever *done* more and done it with less violence or with less needless expenditure of energy.

Given the obvious " weakness " of the American colonies AND geography, he committed the greatest single territorial conquest or acquist that either you or I can at the moment recall. Get out a ruler and see whether Clive by means of cheating and bribing traitors to commit treachery on the actual field of battle mopped up anything larger, irrespective even of the moral stabilities, and lasting contentment.

Yes, there are differences. There always ARE differences. The exact historical parallel doesn't exist. There is opportunism and opportunism. The word has a bad meaning because in a world of Metternichs, and Talleyrands it means doing the other guy the minute you get the chance.

There is also the opportunism of the artist, who

has a definite aim, and creates out of the materials present. The greater the artist the more permanent his creation. And this is a matter of WILL.

It is also a matter of the DIRECTION OF THE WILL. And if the reader will blow the fog off his brain and think for a few minutes or a few stray half-hours he will find this phrase brings us ultimately both to Confucius and Dante.

III

DIRECTIO VOLUNTATIS

THE whole of the *Divina Commedia* is a study of the " directio voluntatis " (direction of the will). I mean in its basal sense.

Dante uses an unfortunate terminology. He says that his poem is written in four senses, the literal, the allegorical, the anagogical and the moral. This is as bad as Major Douglas' algebra.

The literal? Oh, well, that's all right. Allegory is very old-fashioned. Anagogical? Hell's bells, " *nobody* " knows what THAT is. And as for the " moral "?

We descend from the pilgrim " farvers." A moral man in New York or Boston is one who objects to anyone else's committing adultery.

I am a flat-chested highbrow. I can " cure " the whole trouble simply by criticism of style. Oh, can I? Yes. I have been saying so for some time.

At any rate if you translate a mediæval Latin word by a modern New England word having the same letters (all but the final e) and having 'em in the same order, you do NOT convey Dante's meaning to the reader, and the reader arrives at the conclusion that Dante was either a prig or a bore.

To cut the cackle, you can have an OPPORTUNIST who is RIGHT, that is who has certain

convictions and who drives them through circumstance, or batters and forms circumstance with them.

The academic ass exists in a vacuum with a congeries of dead fixed ideas, or with a congeries of fixed ideas which may be " good " and not quite dead, or rather which MIGHT be useful were they brought to focus on something.

The word intellect stinks in the normal Americo-English nostril. Even the word intelligence has come to be unsatisfactory.

Let us deny that *real* intelligence exists until it comes into action.

A man in desperate circumstances, let us say, Remy de Gourmont in pre-war France might get to the point of thinking that an idea is spoiled by being brought into action, but Gourmont also got to the point of cursing intelligence altogether, *vide* his remarks on the lamb. (*Chevaux de Diomède*).

He then got round to defining intellect as the fumbling about in the attempt to create instinct, or at any rate on the road towards instinct. And his word instinct came to mean merely PERFECT and complete intelligence *with a limited scope* applied to recurrent conditions (*vide* his chapters on insects in *La Physique de l'Amour*).

The flying ant or wasp or whatever it was that I saw cut up a spider at Excideuil may have been acting by instinct, but it was not acting by reason of the stupidity of instinct. It was acting with remarkably full and perfect knowledge which did not have to be chewed out in a New Republic article or avoided in a London *Times* leader.

When a human being has an analogous completeness of knowledge, or intelligence carried into

a third or fourth dimension, capable of dealing with NEW circumstances, we call it genius.

This arouses any amount of inferiority complex. Coolidge never aroused ANY inferiority complex. Neither did Harding or Hoover.

Jefferson was one genius and Mussolini is another. I am not putting in *all* the steps of my argument but that don't mean to say they aren't there.

Jefferson guided a governing class. A limited number of the public had the franchise. So far as the first sixty or more years of United States history are concerned there was no need for Jefferson even to imagine a time when the more intelligent members of the public would be too stupid or too lazy to exercise their wit in the discharge of their " duty."

I mean to say T.J. had a feeling of responsibility and he knew other men who had it, it didn't occur to him that this type of man would die out.

John Adams believed in heredity. Jefferson left no sons. Adams left the only line of descendants who have steadily and without a break felt their responsibility and persistently participated in American government throughout its 160 years.

In one case hereditary privilege would have been useless and in the other it hasn't been necessary.

Adams lived to see an " aristocracy of stock-jobbers and land-jobbers " in action and predicted them " into time immemorial " (which phrase an ingenious grammarian *can* by great ingenuity catalogue and give a name to, by counting in a string of ellipses).

Old John teased Tom about his hyperboles, so he is fair game for us in this instance.

As to the ratio of property to responsibility, Ben Franklin remarked that some of the worst rascals he had known had been some of the richest.

This concept has long since faded from American government and almost from the minds of the people. Hamilton didn't believe it, or at any rate both his Hebrew blood and his Scotch blood coursed violently toward the contrary view.

IV

THE modern American cheap sneers at democracy and at some of Jefferson's slogans are based on the assumption that Jefferson's ideas were *idées fixes*.

Attacks on Jefferson's sincerity made during his lifetime were made by the same type of idiot, on precisely the opposite tack. I mean because they weren't *idées fixes*, and because Jefferson was incapable of just that form of stupidity.

An *idée fixe* is a dead, set, stiff, varnished " idea " existing in a vacuum.

The ideas of genius, or of " men of intelligence" are organic and germinal, the " seed " of the scriptures.

You put one of these ideas somewhere, i.e. somewhere in a definite space and time, and something begins to happen.

" All men are born free and equal."

Cheers, bands, band wagons, John stops licking the squire's boots, from the Atlantic strip of the British American colonies to the great port of Marseilles there is a record off-sloughing of inferiority complex.

The drivelling imbecility of the British and French courts ceases to hypnotize *all* the pore boobs. At any rate something gets going.

The idea is as old as Æsop, who said: " We are all sons of Zeus."

. . . . .

Again a little grammar or a little mediæval scholarship would be useful, Albertus Magnus or Aquinas or some fusty old scribbler passed on an age-old distinction between the verb and the noun.

The verb implies a time, a relation to time. Be Christian, go back to the newer part of your Bible. Be Catholic (not Anglo-Catholic), consider the " mystery of the incarnation."

I really do not give an underdone damn about your terminology so long as you understand it and don't mess up the meaning of your words. And (we might add) so long as you, as reader, try to understand the meaning of the text (whatever text) you read.

As a good reader you will refuse to be bamboozled, and when a text has no meaning or when it is merely a mess or bluff you will drop it and occupy yourself with good literature (either *belles lettres*, economic or political).

" *What's this got to do with . . . ?* "

If the gentle reader wants to think, he can learn how to start from Fenollosa's essay on the Chinese Written Character.

AND he can learn how to put his thoughts together in some sort of order from my translation of the Ta Hio (The Great Learning) of Confucius (32 pages and 28 pages respectively).

V

NOBODY can understand the juxtaposition of the two names Jefferson–Mussolini until they are willing to imagine the transposition:

What would Benito Mussolini have done in the American wilderness in 1770 to 1826?

What would Tom Jefferson do and say in a narrow Mediterranean peninsula containing Foggia, Milan, Siracusa, Firenze, with a crusted conservatism that no untravelled American can even suspect of existing.

There are in Volterra houses 2,000 years old, and there are in those houses families who have BEEN IN those houses, father to son to grandson, from the time of Cæsar Augustus.

And there are Italian intellectuals, and from the time of Tiberius the Italian intelligentzia has been *talking* about draining the swamps.

AND there are in Italy fascist officials who are trying their best NOT to govern one whit more than is necessary.

Do I find my Podestà trying to be modern? That is to say do I find him trying to get the peasants from two miles up the hill to behave like American citizens? I mean to say to come to his office or to whatever office they should come to for their particular business INSTEAD of bringing eggs to his door at six o'clock in the morning in order to render their feudal superior propitious to their views or their miseries or their wangles?

Have I gone up and down the by-ways and crannies of this country for more than a decade observing the picturesque overhang of memories and tradition and the idiotic *idées fixes* of the educated Italian?

And I remark again that the cultured Italian has been talking about draining those god-damned marshes since the time of Tiberius Cæsar. And there once was a man named Colà or Nicolà da Rienzi.

ANY ass could compare HIM to Tom Jefferson. Or, more justly, to Pat Henry.

A simpatico and most charming seventy-year-old Italian University President said to me, with eulogy in his voice: " The error of my generation was the underestimation of Marx."

The Italian intelligentsia was amongst the last sections of the public to understand fascism.

The fascist revolution is infinitely more INTERESTING than the Russian revolution because it is not a revolution according to preconceived type.

The Italian intelligentsia, like every other incompetent intelligentsia lived with a lot of set ideas, in a vacuum.

Aragon in the best political propagandist poem of our time cheers loudly for the Bolsheviki.

" There are no brakes on the engine." Banzai. Eljen, etc.

NO brakes on the engine. HOW splendid, how perfectly ripping!

VI

INTELLIGENTSIAS

LENIN did not have the Vatican in his front garden. He knew his Russia and dealt with the Russia he had before him. By comparison a simple equation. I mean by comparison with the States of Italy, the duchies and kingdoms, etc., united much more recently than our own, and the clotted conglomerate of snobbisms, sectional feelings and discrepancies of cultural level, for on the whole the gap between the old civilization, the specialized cultural heritage of the educated Italian and the uncultured Italian is probably greater than exists anywhere else or at least, one finds it in sharper contrast.

In one sense they've all got some sort of culture, milleniar, forgotten, stuck anywhere from the time of Odysseus to the time of St. Dominic, to the time of Mazzini.

Mrs. B.'s cook is taken to the " mountains," that is to say she is taken uphill about a mile and a quarter, and she weeps with nostalgia for the sea, said sea being clearly visible from the kitchen window.

In twenty minutes I can walk into a community with a different language, the uphills speaking something nearer Tuscan and the downhills talking Genovesh. I have heard an excited Milanese cursing the Neapolitan for an African.

You may say that this isn't serious or that one can't take it in the literal sense. But under it lies the fact that truth in Milan is anything but truth down in Foggia.

There is the Latin habit of discussing abstract ideas. In America this habit is restricted to the small undesirable class who write for the New Republic and analogous nuisances. In England it is confined to Fabians.

This habit has nothing to do with knowledge or a desire to learn. It is more or less allied to the desire for eloquence.

I have seen the Italian small shopkeeper in the midst of a verbal soar, utterly unable to attend to a waiting customer until he has delivered his "*opinione*," rounded out his paragraph for a customer already served.

Language for many of them seems to disgorge itself in huge formed blobs, and nothing but violent shock can impede the disgorgement of, let us say, a three-hundred-word blob, once its emission is started.

Hence the rules of the American Senate, the oriental secular tradition of leisure, etc.

Humanity, Italian and every other segment of it, is not given to seeing the FACT, man sees his own preconception of fact.

It takes a genius charged with some form of dynamite, mental or material, to blast him out of these preconceptions.

"NOI CI FACCIAMO SCANNAR PER MUSSOLINI," said my hotel-keeper in Rimini years ago, thinking I knew nothing about the revolution and wanting to get it into my head. Nothing happens without efficient cause. My hotel-keeper was also Comandante della Piazza,

we had got better acquainted by reason of his sense of responsibility, or his interest in what I was doing. The local librarian had shut up the library, and the Comandante had damn well decided that if I had taken the trouble to come to Romagna to look at a manuscript, the library would cut the red tape.

" Scannar " is a very colloquial word meaning to get scragged. It has none of the oratorical quality of " we will die for," but that's what it means. And my friend M. was expressing a simple fact.

This kind of devotion does not come from merely starting a boy-scout movement. It doesn't come to a man like myself for analysing a movement with an historical perspective or with a dozen historic perspectives.

" Can't move 'em with a cold thing like economics " said Arthur Griffiths to the undersigned when Griffiths was engaged in getting his unspeakable and reactionary island out of the control of the ineffably witless British.

Aproposito, an Italian anti-fascist, pure-hearted idealist stood in this room a year or so ago and orated for forty-five minutes in the vein of colonial oratory of 1760–76, with no trace what so bloody ever in his discourse of anything that had been thought in the interim.

When he left an almost inaudible chink or loophole between one clause and another, I interjected: " And what about economics? "

" O wowowowowo ah o, I don't understand anything about eh, such matters."

It is now generally conceded by the Italian non-enthusers that fascism was necessary and that there was no other way.

The communists had NOT the sense, they simply

had not the simple arithmetic and executive ability needed to run a village of five hundred inhabitants.

As to the socialists, a liberal or something of that sort said to me: " They had the chance and per vigliaccheria . . . per VIGLiaccheria refused to take it." Which we may translate that they merely howled and put their tails between their legs. They hadn't the courage to govern or even to come into power.

On the other hand a minister (cabinet minister) said to me of the Capo del Governo: " Once of the left, always left." Uomo di sinistra, sempre sinistra.

" THE CONTINUING REVOLUTION " of the more recent proclamations, is almost a refrain out of Jefferson.

I am not putting these sentences in monolinear syllogistic arrangement, and I have no intention of using that old form of trickery to fool the reader, any reader, into thinking I have proved anything, or that having read a paragraph of my writing he KNOWS something that he can only *know* by examining a dozen or two dozen facts and putting them all together.

There are no exact analogies in history. Henry Adams thought about constructing a science of history and found himself in hot water.

Lenin had luck and had one set of obstacles. He had not the Italian obstacles, and it is perfectly useless to seek the specific weight of one man's achievement on the false supposition that he was solving a different problem from that with which he was, or is, actually concerned.

THE OLDER CULTURE, " Patine."

I have, you may say, lived among the more refined spirits of my epoch, not for the purpose of writing memoirs to the effect that " on this brilliant

occasion there were present . . . etc. . . ." but because stupidity bores me and I have never yet found the intellectual pace too swift or the mental dynamite too high for my still unsatisfied appetite.

Book learnin' has little or nothing to do with intelligence, nevertheless until I came to Italy I never sat down to a lunch table where there was a good three-cornered discussion of the respective merits of Horace and Catullus. That is simply a measure of the desuetude into which classic studies have fallen, especially among practising writers.

It so happens that in the case I have in mind one of the disputants was a professor (not of Latin) and the other *had* translated some William Blake into Italian; though very few of his compatriots have discovered it. Naturally neither of them had heard of economics.

I was going up to San Marino, before the new road was made, and on the wooden seat opposite me sat the Pope Hildebrand or someone who could have sat for Hildebrand's portrait, a solid and magnificent figure, a knut among ecclesiastics, not a filbert or a table nut, but hickory, native hickory with a gold chain weighing I should have said about half a Troy pound, and with a most elegant green silk cord round his hat, and an umbrella that would have held up half Atlas, and with bright imperial purple, red purple silky saucers under his ecclesiastical buttons.

To the left was San Leo and he began to tell me about the cathedral, quoted Dante, drew a ground plan of the church, best pure Romanesque . . . and so forth.

I said: " You are the head of the church in these parts? "

Yes, he was the head of the church and CON-

found it what had they done to him, they had taken him down OUT of that magnificent architectural monument and put him in a place with (the voice went acid with ineffable contempt and exasperation) " a place with a POP—U—LATION! "

This is the spirit that filled the Quattrocento cathedrals with the slabs of malachite, porphyry, lapis lazuli. And his dad must have ploughed his own field.

Put him into the picture along with the refined archæological Monsignori whom I have met in the libraries, or the irreconcilables who were still howling for the restoration of temporal power, or the old " black " families who shut their doors in '70 when the Pope shut himself into the Vatican and kept 'em shut until Mussolini and the Pope signed their concordat. Subject matter for two dozen Italian Prousts, who don't exist because each segment of the country is different.

YOU CAN'T CONQUER A MAP

Down in Foggia an hysterical female, displeased, or rather distressed, that I should leave a monstrous and horrible church, I mean the interior, a composite horror of stucco, dragged me to look at " their Madonna," plaster, from the Rue St. Sulpice or some other factory, void of decency and void of tradition. The pained painted horror had lifted up its eyes six years ago when the town had cholera or measles or something and the faithful were saved by the miracle.

At Terracina the sacristan showed me a little marble barocco angel on the floor of the sacristy, the bishop had had to have it taken out of the church because the peasants insisted on " wor-

shipping IT as Santa Lucia." L'adoravano come Santa Lucia.

AGAINST WHICH

Linc Steffens came back from Russia. Mussolini saw him, and Steff in his autobiography reports the Duce as asking him: " You've seen all that. Haven't you learned anything? "

I also saw Steff at that time. Steff was thinking.

There are early fascist manifestos, or at least one that is highly anti-clerical. I also was anti-clerical. I've seen Christians in England, I've seen French Catholics at Amiens and at Rocamadour, and I don't want to see any more. French bigotry is as displeasing a spectacle as modern man can lay eyes on.

The Christian corruptions have never been able to infect the Italian, he takes it easy, the Mediterranean sanity subsists.

My anti-clericalism petered out in Romagna. I recall a country priest guying the sacristan in the Tempio Malatestiano because the foreigner knew more about the church, " his " church, than the sacristan.

I recall also the puzzled expression of the same priest a few days later as he saw me making my farewells to the stone elephants. I asked him if he considered this form of devotion heretical.

He grinned and seemed wholly undisturbed by fears for my indefinite future.

An old nun in hospital had a good deal of trouble in digesting the fact that I wasn't Christian, no I wasn't; thank God, I wasn't a Protestant, but I wasn't a Catholic either, and I wasn't a Jew, I believed in a more ancient and classical system with a place for Zeus and Apollo. To which with infinite gentleness, " Z'è tutta una religione." " Oh well it's all a religion."

Hence the moderation in the decree: These services will continue because it is the custom of the great majority of the people.

I find F. in the Piazza San Marco chuckling over "Hanno bastinato il becco!" A bit of pure Goldoni that he had just seen in the Venetian law courts.

A row in the Venetian fish market is reported in the daily paper with almost the same phrase as that used in the shindy between Sigismund Malatesta and Count Federico Urbino, Ferrara, 1400 and something.

No American who hasn't lived for years in Italy has the faintest shade of a shadow of a conception of the multiformity and diversity of wholly separate and distinct conservatisms that exist in this country.

All of 'em carved in stone, carpentered and varnished into shape, built in stucco, or organic in the mind of the people.

"Bombe, bombe, bombe per svegliare questi dormiglioni di 'pensatori' Italiani, che credono di essere ancora al tempo del Metastasio," citation from letter received this morning, February 8, anno XI, headed Rome. A letter from a man I met a few years ago still carrying Austrian shell fragments in his system and still crushed. The nitroglycerine he wants is purely verbal nitroglycerine. "Bombs, bombs, bombs to wake up these sluggards, these eyetalian 'thinkers' who still think they're in the time of Metastasio."

FROBENIUS

The intelligent Teuton said a few bright words, in a recent interview, about the difficulty of communication between civilized men of different races.

"It is not what you tell a man but the part of it that he thinks important that determines the ratio

of what is 'communicated' to what is misunderstood."

Hang up what I've said in these chapters. We come to

THE PROBLEM OF ITALY

at the time of the Peace Conference: a number of official men or political figures in Paris, no one of whom could be trusted with a fountain pen or a pocket-knife.

Stef says, or repeats, a story that Clemenceau sketched out the bases of lasting peace, for the fun of seeing how quickly ALL of the delegates would refuse to consider such bases.

I take it the only point the Allies at large were, on arrival, agreed on, was that they should not keep their agreements with Italy.

As to the "atmosphere": I saw Arabian Lawrence in London one evening after he had been with Lloyd George and, I think, Clemenceau or at any rate one of the other big pots of the congeries. He wouldn't talk about Arabia, and quite naturally he wouldn't talk about what had occurred in the afternoon. But he was like a man who has been chucked in a dungheap and is furtively trying to flick the traces of it off his clothing.

Any thorough judgment of MUSSOLINI will be in a measure an act of faith, it will depend on what you *believe* the man means, what you believe that he wants to accomplish.

I have never believed that my grandfather put a bit of railway across Wisconsin simply or chiefly to make money or even with the illusion that he would make money, or make more money in that way than in some other.

I don't believe any estimate of Mussolini will be

valid unless it *starts* from his passion for construction. Treat him as *artifex* and all the details fall into place. Take him as anything save the artist and you will get muddled with contradictions. Or you will waste a lot of time finding that he don't fit your particular preconceptions or your particular theories.

The Anglo-Saxon is particularly inept at understanding the Latin clarity of " Qui veut la fin veut les moyens." Who wills the end wills the means.

There is Lenin's calm estimate of all other Russian parties: They are very clever, yes, they can do EVERYTHING except act.

If you don't believe that Jefferson was actuated by a (in the strict quaker sense) " concern " for the good of the people, you will quibble, perhaps, over details, perhaps over the same details that worried his old friend John Adams.

If you don't believe that Mussolini is driven by a vast and deep " concern " or will for the welfare of Italy, not Italy as a bureaucracy, or Italy as a state machinery stuck up on top of the people, but for Italy organic, composed of the last ploughman and the last girl in the olive-yards, then you will have a great deal of trouble about the un-Jeffersonian details of his surfaces.

As fast as possible I put my cards and beliefs on the table. I have had good years in London and Paris and I like some kinds of Frenchmen, and I greatly admire at least one German, but EUROPE being what it is, the Hun hinterland epileptic, largely stuck in the bog of the seventeenth century, with lots of crusted old militars yelling to get back siph'litic Bill and lots more wanting pogroms, and with France completely bamboozled by *La Comité des Forges*, and, in short, things being what they are in Europe as Europe, I believe in a

STRONG ITALY as the only possible foundation or anchor or whatever you want to call it for the good life in Europe.

Jefferson was super-wise in his non-combatancy, but John Adams was possibly right about frigates. Unpreparedness and sloppy pacifism are not necessarily the best guarantees of peace.

As to actual pacifism; there are plenty of people who think it merely a section of war propaganda, and until there is at least one peace society that will look at the facts, one may suspect the lot of corruption.

If they are not all cheats and liars they are too dumb to face contemporary economics, and the safety of to-morrow cannot be entrusted wholly to morons.

The DUCE sits in Rome calling five hundred bluffs (or thereabouts) every morning. Some bright lad might present him to our glorious fatherland under the title of MUSSOLINI DEBUNKER.

An acute critic tells me I shall never learn to write for the public because I insist on citing other books.

How the deuce is one to avoid it? Several ideas occurred to humanity before I bought a portable typewriter.

De Gourmont wrote a good deal about breaking up clichés, both verbal and rhythmic.

There is possibly some trick of handing out Confucius, Frobenius, Fenollosa, Gourmont, Dante, etc., as if the bright lad on the platform had done all of their jobs for himself, with the express aim of delighting his public.

I shall go on patiently trying to explain a complex of phenomena, without pretending that its twenty-seven elements can with profit to the reader be considered as five.

VII

TAKING it by and large the Russian revolution seems to me fairly simple *by comparison.* If I am wrong it is probably because I haven't been ten years in Russia.

At any rate, *as I see it*, the Russian revolution is the end of the Marxian cycle, that is to say Marxian economics were invented in a time when labour was necessary, when a *great deal* of labour was *still* necessary, and his, Marx's, values are based on labour.

The new economics bases value on the cultural heritage, that is to say on labour PLUS the complex of inventions which make it possible to get results, which *used* to be exclusively the results of labour, with very little labour, and with a quantity of labour that tends steadily to diminish.

If the indulgent reader will consider not ONE revolution but the successive revolutions, violent and quiet, political, economic, social, he will see that none of them start from the same point, and that none of them arrive at identical destinations, and that a nation two hundred years behind the rest gives a jump which may carry it further in a given direction than any one has gone, but that the next nation to jump from, let us say, a higher, a more advanced level of culture lands in a different place on a still higher level, or into a still greater complexity.

I find no metaphor for the bathos of those

denizens of developed countries who kneel and ask Russia to save 'em. I am only reminded of the story about George Moore and his braces.

Russian Bolshevism is the outcome of centuries of historic determinism, Russian habit of having a town council or mir where all the moonheads used to go and jaw about it. Russia full of tribal *superstitions*, by which I mean " left-overs."

There is no use in thinking about shoving this state of things suddenly onto a totally different people with utterly different habits. Results would be just as funny as the first trials by jury among the Hungarian peasantry.

As to communism, the frontier between private and public affairs is NOT fixed, it varies from one state of society to another. The Anglo-Saxons had a certain amount of common land, *vide* the name " Boston Common," which is still in Massachusetts.

The English boob was done out of most of his common land some time or other, probably under whiggery and the earlier Georges.

Quincy Adams was a communist in so far as he wanted to hold a lot of unsettled land " for the nation."

The idea was unseasonable and would have held back the settlement of the continent for who knows how many decades.

If Adams hadn't been deficient in capacity for human contacts he might, however, have saved " for the nation," enough land to be useful in a number of conjectural ways. It *did* " belong to the nation."

A bolshevik friend, attacking fascism, said that Russia " belongs to them," meaning that it belongs to the people, yet it is very difficult to see *how* the

plural or singular Russian *owns* his country, any more than I own the gulf of Tigullio. I can see it, I can swim in it when it is warm enough.

Besides, a Russian who isn't a member of the party is certainly less a proprietor, than is a member.

I have no doubt that the idea of a sovereign people gave the buff-and-blue hefties a great sensation. It was a stimulant, a tonic, it may have washed off a lot of inferiority complex, tho' I can't believe that the sense of being a feudal underling was very strong in Connecticut in 1770.

Perhaps the greatest work of a political genius is to correct the more flagrant disproportions of his epoch. If the reader will peruse any record of the utterly drivelling idiocy of the French Court from the time of Henri IV to fat Louis, or the annals of any European country in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries he will find himself growing more and more rabidly Jeffersonian.

It is probable that a reader in 2133 looking over the record of nineteenth-century villainy will feel a revulsion from " irresponsibility," growing more acute as he comes down into the debauch of Hatrys, Kreugers and other unconvicted financiers whose tropisms conform.

VIII

FROBENIUS, in the interview referred to, said that Mussolini's miracle had been that of reawakening the sense of responsibility. I cite Frobenius merely to have my own opinion independently delivered by another man who knows enough of the facts to form an intelligent judgment.

By taking more responsibility than any other man (save possibly Lenin) has dared to assume in our time Mussolini has succeeded in imparting here and there a little of this sense to some others.

The cheery and relatively irresponsible " ought " of the eighteenth-century doctrinaires and enthusiasts has been weighed out and measured by 160 years of experiment. Jefferson thought people would feel responsible, or didn't think, let us say, didn't foresee or clearly think the contrary.

A limited electorate was in being. He, T.J., had enough to do with his present, the conservation of the U.S., the gaining of time for its growth, etc., the problem of slavery which he gradually found was beyond his time. As well to be clear that he was " agriculturalist " FOR his time and his locus, but that he did see industry coming.

Ultimately our factories, which we needed for independence, were shoved on to us by wars and embargoes, and chiefly by British fat-headedness.

A hundred and more years later Russia knows enough to WANT factories and to want 'em in a hurry.

There will be no clear thinking until you understand that Italy is NOT Russia. Racially, geographically and with all the implications of both words Italy is not Russia, nor is America Italy, nor is Russia America, etc., and I do not " advocate " America's trying to be either Russia or Italy, *und so weiter.*

The most I could DO would be to try to persuade a few of the more intelligent people in all three countries to try to find out, within the limits of the possible, where and what are the others, and what are the relations between them, or the cordialities possible, or at any rate the possible comprehensions.

All of which won't be helped by holding up a false " artificial horizon," or painting distorted backgrounds for falsified effigies.

As to Jefferson's interests, let us say his practical interests: he was interested in rice, he believed in feeding the people, or at least that they ought to be fed, he wasn't averse from pinching a bit of rice or at least from smuggling a sack of a particularly fine brand out of Piedmonte. With the moral aim of improving all the rice in Virginia.

Mussolini has persuaded the Italians to grow better wheat, and to produce Italian colonial bananas.

This may explain the " Dio ti benedica " scrawled on a shed where some swamps were.

IX

NOW what about prejudice? Censorship of the Press!

I had read so much about this in foreign papers, particularly in the *Chicago Tribune*, that I had taken it for granted. A few weeks ago the editor of the village local paper was vastly surprised when apropos of a fairly strong expression of opinion, I asked him if he could print it. Of course he could print it, he could print anything he liked. There was no censorship of *that* sort. If he made an ass of himself someone would tell him. I have seen several cheery Italians, fascists, bearing up after a series of reprimands.

As the Duce has pithily remarked: " Where the Press is '*free*' it merely serves special interests."

The kind of intellectual respiration where you print a thing and get spoken to afterward is vastly different from London stuffiness. Honest thought, I mean serious sober thought intended to be of public utility is, in England, merely excluded from all the Press. Statement of undenied and undeniable fact is merely blanketed for five years, for a decade, for longer. They don't dare publish the reports of their own medical officers on the state of the population, let alone economic thinking.

A great deal of yawp about free Press proves on examination to be a mere howl for irresponsibility.

American journalism has built up an ideal of impartiality. A syndicate official writes me that as

" a news writer he can't afford the luxury of having opinions."

That is in part practical, it is in part the result of an ideal, the ideal of being the impartial observer; of not colouring your report of fact by an " idea " or by a conviction.

But say that a given situation has ten components and that the reporter sees one? It is his duty to report it? TO WHOM?

If we had a perfect organ of public opinion or a perfect newspaper earnestly trying to tell thoughtful readers the truth, that would be lovely.

The paper discovering an error of its own would report it and so forth.

As it is, even our supposedly serious quarterlies do not correct misstatements. My mind goes back to Col. Harvey who was an editor before he wore short pants in London.

Then there is the unavoidable difference in truth itself, which arises from the different predisposition and from the different intention and the different capacity of the beholder.

A field is one thing to the strolling by-passer, another to the impressionist painter, yet another to the farmer determined to plant seed in it, and get a return.

There are some things which should be reported to " the authorities " first; and to the public only when the authorities are wilfully inattentive, incompetent or dishonest.

English free speech, the privilege of Hyde Park oratory, etc., is mostly a mark of contempt for thought in *any* form whatsoever. Britain believes that the talk is a safety valve to let off steam, or that, at any rate this form of cerebral secretion is incomprehensible.

The Latin can't help believing that an idea IS something or other. Put an idea into a Latin and it makes him think, or at least talk, if not act.

WHERE DOES THIS LEAD?

As far as the present author is concerned it leads to the fact I prefer a *de facto* freedom to theoretical freedom. I don't care a damn about a free Press if it means that every time I have anything to say that appears to me to be of the least interest or " of exceptional interest " some nincompoop keeps me from printing it. I don't care whether the nincompoop is Professor Carus or Col. Harvey or some snob in London, or a lying and obsequious British politician who dislikes " colloquial language " because the reader might understand it.

The motive or motives of an act comprise one of its dimensions. The journalist has often no greater motive than a desire to make the front page or any page, and, at one remove, the lesser literary journalist may merely want to stir up a shindy, as has been the case recently *re* Mr. Hemingway.

À NOUS LA LIBERTÉ

Liberty is defined in the declaration of the *Droits de l'homme*, as they are proclaimed on the Aurillac monument, as the right to do anything that *ne nuit pas aux autres*. That does not harm others.

This is the concept of liberty that started the enthusiasms in 1776 and in 1790.

I see a member of the Seldes family giving half an underdone damn whether their yawps do harm or have any other effect save that of getting themselves advertised.

If you were talking about the liberty of a *respons-*

ible Press that is a different kettle of onions, and is something very near to the state of the Press in Italy at the moment.

The irresponsible may be in a certain sense " free " though not always free of the consequences of their own irresponsibility, whatever the theoretical government, or even if there be no government whatsoever, but their freedom is NOT the ideal liberty of eighteenth-century preachers.

A defect, among others, of puritanism, or of protestantism or of Calvin the damned, and Luther and all the rest of these blighters whom we Americans have, whether we like it or not, on our shoulders, is that it and they set up rigid prohibitions which take no count whatsoever of motive.

Thou shalt not this and that and the other. This is a shallowness, it is the thought of inexperienced men, it is thought in two dimensions only.

What you want to know about the actions of a friend or mistress is WHY did he or she do it?

If the act was done for affection you forgive it. It is only when the doer is indifferent to us that we care most for the effect.

Doc Shelling used to say that the working man (American or other) wanted his rights *and* all of everybody else's.

" The party " in Russia has simplified things too far, perhaps? too far?

We have in our time suffered a great clamour from those who ask to be " governed," by which they mean mostly that they want to run yammering to their papa, the state, for jam, biscuits, and persistent help in every small trouble. What do they care about rights? What is liberty, if you can have subsidy?

Now in Italy industry is not controlled (February

8, anno XI). The state is willing to supervise. Out of twenty-one applications for company charters made under the new laws, up till Monday last week, fourteen had been accepted, and the other seven had been found to proceed from " gente non serii." That is to say from farceurs, or people who don't know enough to come in out of the wet.

Not only do frontiers need watching but man in a mechanical age, you me'n'th'other fellow, need help against Kreugers and Hatrys.

The demarcation between public and private affairs shifts with the change in the bases of production. A thousand peasants each growing food on his own fields can exist without trust laws.

My leading question at this point is whether any other nation has in this year, 1933, more directly or frankly faced the question: WHAT Does harm to other men?

Or whether any other government (even including the new and spotless Spanish Republic) is readier to act more quickly in accordance with a new and untrammelled perception of changed relations?

Has any statesman since Jefferson shaken himself free of clichés, or helped free others in greater degree?

Confucius suggests that we learn to distinguish the root from the branch. In the Noh programme the Shura or battle play precedes the Kazura or drama of mysterious calm.

You can quite meritoriously sigh for justice, but Mussolini has been presumably right in putting the first emphasis on having a government strong enough to get the said justice. That is to say taking first the " government " in our text and proceeding at reasonable pace toward the " which governs least."

Thus with the consortium of some industry that

was discussed the other day . . . the various powers in said industry were told to confer, and were asked to work out an agreement of quota production with no finger of government interjected. If they can't agree the government will take on the job of arranging an agreement.

The idea of supervision may have started from Adam Smith's dictum: Men of the same trade never meet without a conspiracy against the general public.

This has taken more than a hundred years to sink in.

Why, you will ask, should I, a correct Jeffersonian and Confucian, accept all these so different details?

X

THE "NEW" ECONOMICS

IN 1917 or 1918 Major Douglas began to think out loud, about credit. The British Press showed itself for what it was, a hired toady, a monkey garden where thought was taboo. You could not get any discussion. If the Major said or wrote something that sounded all right, the layman couldn't in that year corroborate it. No one of "greater experience" either contradicted him lucidly or confirmed him from adequate knowledge.

I set out on a longish trail, asking questions from all and sundry.

Old Spire who had sat on a Crédit Agricole board said: Yes, very nice, communal credit, but when you get your board, every man on that board has a brother-in-law.

I said to Max Pam: "As a banker can you tell me, if I want to build a chicken coop, is there any reason why I shouldn't do so, instead of coming to you for permission and giving you six per cent. on the money I borrow to pay someone to build it.

Mr. Pam replied: The only thing is that if someone happened to see you building it they might think you were too poor to be able to afford to borrow the money, and that would be bad for your credit, and a lot of people might send in their bills.

A Boston millionaire said something for which

I can find parallel in the "writings" of Henry Ford.

And a chap that had started a what do you call it, credit club, I think they call it, in Californy, said: "Now you'd think the simplest thing to do, which was all I asked 'em, would be to meet once a month and say who paid their bills.

"Would they? Naw. And every time they sold a lot to a dishonest merchant they were doing harm to one that was honest."

And going back a little, the Sinn Feiners as they were then called before that meant so exclusively Eamon de Valera, put a man on to studying the New Economics. And Señor Madariaga was called back to Spain to look after the treasury or something or other of that sort.

And, more recently, all this yatter about technocracy got out from under the lid. Without, apparently, much moral direction . . . my own belief being that all or most of the technocracy results had to be got surreptitiously, in so far as the members of the Columbia University faculty had, in great measure, to conceal the significance of their findings, and stick to the purely material phase. But in 1918 we knew in London that the problem of production was solved, and that the next job was to solve distribution and that this meant a new administration of credit. I don't think there was any ambiguity about that.

The question being how and who was to break down the ring of craft, of fraud, and of iron.

PERSONAL

London stank of decay back before 1914 and I have recorded the feel of it in a poem here and

there. The live man in a modern city feels this sort of thing or perceives it as the savage perceives in the forest. I don't know how many men keep alive in modern civilization but when one has the frankness to compare notes one finds that the intuition is confirmed just as neatly or almost as neatly as if the other man saw a shop sign. I mean the perception is *not* simply the perception of one's own subjectivity, but there is an object which others perceive.

Thus London going mouldy back in say 1912 or 1911. After the War death was all over it. I said something of the sort to Padre José Elizondo. There had been a number of Spaniards in London during the War, there being no Paris for them to go to.

"Yes," said the Padre, "*we* feel it, and we are all of us going back," i.e., to Spain.

London was in terror of thought. Nothing was being buried. Paris was tired, very tired, but they wanted *table rase*, they wanted the dead things cleared out even if there were nothing to replace them.

Italy was, on the other hand, full of bounce. I said all of this to a Lombard writer. I said: London is dead, Paris is tired, but here the place is alive. What they don't know is plenty, but there is some sort of animal life here. If you put an idea into these people they would DO something.

The Lombard writer said yes . . . and looked across the hotel lobby; finally he said: "And you know it is terrible to be surrounded by all this energy and . . . and . . . not to have an idea to put into it."

I think that must have been 1920. I can't remember which year contained what, possibly in '21 the cavalieri della morte passed through the Piazza San Marco, and when I got to Milan that year I asked

my friend what about it. What is this fascio? He said there was nothing to it or words to that effect. At any rate not a matter of interest.

You know how it is when you stop off for a night in a hurry and haven't much left but a ticket to where you've got to get back to. Or perhaps that was the year when one was lucky to get there at all. I did go out via Chiasso by tramway but I suspect that was 1920 and that in '21 or '22 or whatever spring it was, I hadn't any excuse save an interest in other matters and the supposition that IF it were interesting my friend would have known it.

It may be, of course, that one's intuition takes in the whole, and sees straight, whereas one's verbal receiving-station or one's logic deals with stray detail, and that one's intuition can't get hold of the particular, or anything particular, but only of the whole.

Let it stand that I was right in my main perception but that any stray remark or any wisp of straw blowing nowhere could fool me as to the particular point of focus.

Say I hadn't a nose for news. Why should I have had? One may learn several trades in a lifetime but one can't learn 'em all, all at once.

And if I had gone then to the *Popolo d'Italia* I don't the least know that I would now have any better sense of the specific weight of the fascio. I might have got lost in a vast welter of detail.

What I saw was the line of black shirts, and the tense faces of cavalieri della morte. I was at Florian's. Suddenly a little old buffer rushed up to a front table and began to sputter forty-eight to the dozen: " chubbuchcuchushcushcushcuhkhh." Violent protests etc., " wouldn't, wouldn't, wouldn't." It was a different kind of excitement, a more acri-

monious excitement than the noise of the midday pigeon-feeding.

Then came the file of young chaps with drawn faces and everyone stood to attention and took off their hats about something, all except one stubborn foreigner, damned if he would stand up or show respect until he knew what they meant. Nobody hit me with a club and I didn't see any oil bottles.

Life was interesting in Paris from 1921 to 1924, nobody bothered much about Italy. Some details I never heard of at all until I saw the Esposizione del Decennio.

Communists took over some factories, but couldn't dispense with credit. No one has told us whether ANY Italian communist even thought of the subject.

Lenin couldn't, after all, be both in Turin and in Moscow.

Gabriele declined to obey the stuffed plastrons of Paris, Marinetti made a few remarks in the Chamber. It can't be said that the outer world cared. When one got back to Italy things were in order, that is, up to a point.

I heard an alarm bell in Ravenna. A lady who had long known the Duce complained about Italy's being Prussianized one day when a train started on time.

The Tyrolean bellboy or boots or factotum at Sirmione ran up the tricolour topside downward on a feast day, either from irridentism or because he didn't know t'other from which. Nobody noticed it save the writer. You don't go to Italy for criticism, there is a lack of minute observation —I mean when Giovanni isn't being punctilious or having his sensibilities ruffled. . . .

" Noi altri Italiani," said one medico, " we don't

pay attention like that to EVERY word." This was during a discussion on style (in writing).

And another year I went down to Sicily.

Lady X was worried about the work in the sulphur mines. The Duce had been there, but he had been steered into and through the one decent mine in the place. . . .

XI

FOR several years the general lack of mental coherence in the anti-fascists, all every and any anti-fascist I encountered, increased my respect for the fascio. Apart from the Rimini man, I don't think I knew any fascists.

One year the son of the proprietor in Cesena gave me the usual Colà da Rienzi oration, at the end of which he drew a picture of Mazzini from his pocket and ecstatically kissed it.

The Comandante della Piazza considered this act due to ignorance. Gigi aged two used to stand up on his chair after lunch and say " Popolo ignorante! " as a sort of benediction, one day he added the personal note " And the worst of all is my *nurse*."

Then there were a few days in Modena before an anniversary of the martyrs. Posters stating the number of martyrs. Proclamations from Farinacci indicating that the proper way to remember the martyrs was to beat up all the working men in the district. I think this went on for two days or possibly longer up till the evening before " the day." Then there appeared a little strip of paper on the walls, a little strip about eighteen inches by four, to the effect:

The secretary of the Party is compelled to remain in Rome by press of official business.

I think it was even briefer. It was signed "Mussolini."

When thinking of revolution, you must think of several revolutions. I know about two from Stef and about the shindy in Ireland. . . . I can't afford Spanish car fare.

XII

GOVERNMENT BY THEORY OR BY INTELLIGENCE

JEFFERSON did not have the Vatican in his garden, he did not have the Roman aristocracy in his garden. I make no pretence to direct knowledge of the Roman aristocracy, my contact having been for some years limited to one prince who is unimpressed thereby, and to a few other meetings on tennis courts. The prince's opinion: "Roman society! ANYbody can get into Roman society, all you got to do is to HANG OUT a HAM!"

One hears stories about Roman society, a Proustless congeries, museum pieces of immemorial tradition, American sustenance of the Edwardian and Victorian periods.

Years ago in the pastoral epoch they used to play polo, quite good but very cheap polo using one pony a whole afternoon, then there came an American millionaire ambassador and he used three or four thoroughbreds all at once and rode all round the patricians, and that, roughly speaking, ended polo for the Romans who couldn't afford the new method.

And there is Prince X who is said to cast off the thin peel of fine tailoring once he gets back to his estates, and to be a fellow-barbarian among his own peasants, etc.

On the whole my impression, worth no more than any one else's impression, is that this subdivided and resubdivided small world hovers between the chapel roof and the cocktail-shaker, some of the senior members having very beautiful, if sometimes vacuous, manners and some of the young, none at all.

In no case can it be considered a milieu for ideas, that is to say for active and living ideas as opposed to trrrrraditions. Some parts of it must be about as level-headed as the sur-realists in private life.

Into the vicinage of these black papalists and these by-New York refurnished entitleds came the son of a blacksmith, a chap who had edited a terrible left-wing paper, a fellow who had worked eleven hours a day in Lausanne for thirty-two centesimi the hour (pre-War, when 32 centesimi were worth six and a fraction cents).

It was very disturbing. I don't think the Roman milieu is as idiotic as Bloomsbury or as wafty as the Nouvelle Revue Française, but this is purely personal distortion. I know more about the drivelling idiocy of those more northern milieux. In all such monkey gardens conversation is two-thirds denigration, petty yatter about irrelevant flaws, and demarcation between the ouistitis who write most of the *Criterion*, or who form chapels wherever there can be gathered together a few hundred or a few dozen idle people who are emphatically NOT artists, but who give themselves importance by hanging on to the edge of artistic reputations or social notorieties, is always this niggling over the minor defect and this failing utterly to weigh up any work or any man *as an entirety*, balancing major with minor.

As to the kind of thing: The Duke of Xq was in the cabinet and brought in a law which the boss

said was tyrannous and oppressive, oppressive to the working man, so the boss rewrote it a week or so later; not, I believe, as a law for an ideal republic situated in a platonic paradise but as an arrangement possible in Italy in the year VIII or IX of the Era Fascista, that is to say a much milder law than the Duke's, whereon the Duke was peeved like any other contributor to an amateur *vers libre* monthly or any other young schoolgirl, and announced that he was a defender of popular liberties and resigned from the cabinet, and anybody who knew anybody who knew or spoke well of the government was regarded as a member of the Cheka.

XIII

CULTURE

THERE is a lot of " culture " in Italy, by which I mean people with social position write one or two books. And there was another Duke whom my friend the more or less known author G defined as a *cretino*. He had nice manners. I found out, after a time, that he was a very Catholic Catholic, I mean very pious according to some mysterious criterion; one day I inadvertently said a good word about the government, not to him but to his wife. I have never seen him since then.

Titles in Italy might perhaps puzzle the just-arrived foreigner. Roughly speaking, princes and dukes are " in society " and live lives of, let us say, luxury and ease or at any rate of varying splendour as judged by professors and working men.

The rank of Cavaliere seems to be allotted mainly to dentists and to photographers. A very competent and charming hairdresser well-known in this vicinage was a Marchese but didn't use his title in business. Count Romulus of Begni is a hotel-keeper in a mountain town of about 900 inhabitants, sort of, as you might say, maintained, helped on by his friends who feel his position ought to be kept up for the village credit.

But Italian snobism is multiform by comparison with that in long-centralized countries, it doesn't

all scale down in neat categories from a half-witted royalty at the top, or from a couple of mouldy groups of Bourbonists and Orleanists, etc., as in the cheesy districts of Paris.

In occasional spare moments I have tried in vain to follow a few of its shades and nuances and to understand why and where that which fancies itself as noble don't mingle with higher plutocracy or with other people with excellent breeding, and the eternal mystery of the accessibility of all privileged classes to idiots and to sycophants.

FIRST SHOCK:

Fascism is probably the first anti-snob movement that has occurred in this peninsula since the days of Cato the younger.

On the other hand there is definitely so much culture in the serious sense of that word in Italy. There is the scholarly class, the people with set habits and an acquaintance with a small amount of catalogued and evalued literature, and a questionable taste in old painting, etc. In every town you will find people still browsing on the hang-over of the Renaissance, but self-contained, having dismissed the vanities of social glamour, exchanging a few words or not exchanging a few words in small cafés, living dignifiedly on invisible incomes, etc. . . .

But as further complication: These sensitive kindly professors who have never affirmed anything in their lives, who are possibly too cultured to make an affirmation, or too polite to risk stating an opinion that might jostle their colloquitor, are on the other hand remarkably set, stubborn, unmovable.

They have never asked anyone else to change an

opinion and had never expected to change one of their own.

Scholarship has led them into a realm of uncertainty, or to a remote grove where contradictions are needless. This doesn't apply simply to museum pieces of seventy but to the men of my own generation. The older ones are more mild and the younger more rigid but the fixity is impartially divided between them.

If Mussolini had committed the error of getting into an Italian university there would have been no fascist decennial.

XIV

WHY ITALY?

ITALY, for the very simple reason that after the great infamy there was no other clot of energy in Europe capable of opposing ANY FORCE WHATEVER to the infinite evil of the profiteers and the sellers of men's blood for money.

England grovelled in an utter terror, flat on her belly before banks and bankers' touts. The Press lied, economic discussion was taboo, though a huge camouflage of mystification was kept up by licensed economists.

That banks had power in Italy no one will be so naïve as to deny, but in no other cranny of Europe was there ANY other power whatever save the power of the gombeen man.

Corbaccio has at last brought out a volume on gun-sellers, putting a name and a date and a detail on what " we " have known for some time.

I don't at the moment know exactly which who is related to what who or which French nitroglycerine profiteer is a relative of the wife of von Papen.

Or whether England has been sending money to Krupp for munitions received in time for the late shindy or what the British diplomat said at Doorn, but I do know that there are a great number of public men who would not take any trouble to put an end to such doings, or who would excuse them-

selves on the grounds that they hadn't the power or " weren't authorized " or hadn't received instructions.

JEFFERSON was guyed as a doctrinaire. It is difficult to see what doctrine covers his " Embargo " unless it be the doctrine that when an unforeseen emergency arises one should try to understand it and meet it.

The truth is that Jefferson used verbal formulations as tools. He was not afflicted by fixations. Neither he nor Mussolini has been really interested in governmental machinery. That is not paradox, they have both invented it and used it, but they have both been much more deeply interested in something else.

Jefferson found himself in a condition of things that had no precedent in any remembered world. He saw like a shot that a new system and new mechanisms MUST come into being to meet it.

He was agrarian IN the colonies and in the U.S.A. of HIS TIME, that is to say a time when, and a place where, there was abundance and superabundance of land.

In Europe there wasn't enough land, not so much in the REAL sense of the land not being there but in the sense that it wasn't available for public needs. IT WAS OWNED.

There existed a problem of distribution in America though nobody called it that.

" Everyone " thought it would be a good thing for the land to become productive.

What's the difference for the sake of a political emergency between an over-abundance and an overproduction which rapidly produces an over-abundance?

And what does one DO when faced with either?

Our forefathers pa'acel'd out the land but took no precautions about keeping it pa'acel'd.

And after a due lapse of time people found out that land needed labour, Mr. Marx of Germany was the most persistently loud and outspoken about labour.

Marx found it was needed for " everything," and that from it proceeded all value.

There is a French song which considerably antedates Marx, it says that there is no king, prince, or duke but lives by the effort of the labourer (*laboureur* in that song indicating mainly the peasant ploughman, as can be proved by the context).

But Jefferson saw machinery in the offing, he didn't like it, he didn't like the idea of the factory.

If you are hunting up bonds of sympathy between T.J. and the Duce, put it first that they both hate machinery or at any rate the idea of cooping up men and making 'em all into UNITS, unit production, denting in the individual man, reducing him to a mere amalgam.

Possibly in Mussolini's case it dates from his having been caught for a time under the heel of the mastodon; pushing his car in Lausanne, and seeing the country lads jammed into factories.

Both he and T.J. had sympathy with the beasts. They still plough with oxen in Italy and they say that the sentimental foreigner with his eye for the picturesque and the classic scholar who likes to be reminded of Virgil, etc., are not at the root of it. The *bue* IS indisputably *simpatico*. I don't believe even Marinetti can help liking the sight of a pair of grey oxen scrunching along under olive-trees, or lugging a plough up an almost vertical hillside. There are plenty of fields in Italy where a tractor

would be little use and larger farm machinery no economy.

However, the Duce is capable, as T.J. was capable, of putting a prejudice or a sentiment in his pocket. He has looked over a few model factories, he is all for machinery when it means machines in the open air in suitable places, as for *bonifica*, draining of swamps.

Neither he nor T.J. was interested in, nor bamboozled by, money. That gives us three common denominators or possibly four: agriculture, sense of the " root and the branch," readiness to scrap the lesser thing for the thing of major importance, indifference to mechanism as weighed against the main purpose, fitting of the means to that purpose without regard to abstract ideas, even if the idea was proclaimed the week before last.

Jefferson was denounced as vacillating. A man who plugs after a main purpose for sixty years is no more vacillating than a general who wins a campaign by keeping his light troops mobile. Opportunist? Rightly opportunist!

The bad, or in the deeper sense, the silly opportunism is that of Churchill.

Shane Leslie was greatly bedazzled by his stout cousin Winston. He wrote a book to tell it to dh' woild. Winston once said to Leslie apropos of thinking and having ideas (in the sense of making ideas for oneself): " Don't waste your time making munitions, be a GUN and shoot off other people's munitions."

Leslie, as a journalist, of sorts, was overwhelmed by this brilliance. Both cousins are half-breed Americans, determined to succeed, just like the cheapest of Mr. Lorimer's heroes.

Yeats, who was personally impressed by Churchill

as a table companion, and who found him so much more interesting than Lloyd George or the other British politicians, was puzzled, at least for a number of years, because Winston didn't somehow get to the top; and has more or less faded out of the picture, even though Winston's charming mother used to tell people that Winston had got out the fleet (August 1914).

In short a GUN, a BIG GUN pointed at nothing.

On the other hand Jefferson meant it, and the Romagnol has a meaning. With all the superficial differences that could very well be in this world neither T.J. nor B.M. is a Gongorist, i.e. one who obscures the whole by the details.

Jefferson as a lawyer and as a law scholar used legalities and legal phrases as IMPLEMENTS, Mussolini as an ex-editor uses oratory, and by comparison with Italian habits of speech (" these damned Eyetalyan intellexshuls that think they are still contemporaries of Metastasio "), that oratory is worth study.

It is as different from Lenin's as the crags of Zoagli are from the Siberian steppe. It is alternatively gentle and expanded as the etc. . . . plains of Apulia, and abrupt as the Ligurian coast. And if one takes it from the spoken news-reel, one sees that it differs from town to town. For the guy knows his eggs and his Italy. The speech at Forlì was at Forlì and not at Torino.

XV

THE SECRET OF THE DUCE is possibly the capacity to pick out the element of immediate and major importance in any tangle; or, in the case of a man, to go straight to the centre, for the fellow's major interest. " Why do you want to put your ideas in order? "

Jefferson was all over the shop, discursive, interested in everything: to such an extent that he even wrote a long rambling essay on metric. He was trying to set up a civilization in the wilderness, he measured the Maison Carrée, sent over Houdin to America, and thought it would be better not to sculp Washington in a fancy dress costume.

Mussolini found himself in the cluttered rubbish and cluttered splendour of the dozen or more strata of human effort: history, the romanesque cluttered over with barocco, every possible sort of refinement, dust-covered, sub-divided, passive, sceptical, lazy, caressed by milleniar sun, Rome, Byzantium, Homeric Greece still in Sicily, *belle au bois dormante*; full of habits, brittle in mind, or say: half of 'em brittle, and the other half having firecracker mentality, sputter-and-bang enthusiasm, all over in thirteen seconds.

All right, bo', you come along with a card-deck, set card for each clot of theories, demo-liberal, bolshevik, anti-clerical, etc., and make that junk-

shop into a nation, a live nation on its toes like a young bull in the Cordova ring.

I have seen several admirable shows in my time. I saw groggy old England get up onto her feet from 1914 to '18. I don't like wars, etc. . . . but given the state of decadence and comfort and general incompetence in pre-War England, nobody who saw that effort can remain without respect for England-during-that-war.

I am not contradicting myself. Respect for that honest heave and effort has nothing to do with the state of utter dithering deliquescence into which England slopped in 1919.

I like to see a man do something I can't. I like to see Brancusi settle a form in stone, or Picabia show up half a year's work by Picasso with a few apparently effortless twists of the pen.

All of which is accentuated by my contempt at the sight of some bloater with great position either stalling or avoiding the point or being just too god-damned stupid or too superficially silly to understand something that is put plumb bang in front of him, and which if he weren't just a low-down, common, yaller hound dog he would look at and having seen would act on his knowledge.

It is one of my lasting regrets that I didn't when I had the chance, show up Mr. Balfour. That's the curse of having had some sort of a bringing up and of not having escaped it. It was, I think, the first time I had seen the great Arthur and I was the youngest man in the room, and I was the only man not in a swaller-tail coat . . . so I was modest and well behaved . . . or at any rate acted that way . . . I also looked at the audience and couldn't see anyone there who was the least likely to understand what I had ready to tell 'em.

XVI

WHO IS worth meeting?

A decade or so ago when I was settling into Paris I more or less unconsciously drifted on to, you can't say this *question*, but I was talking to Brancusi with the undefined aim of ascertaining more or less . . . etc. . . .

And he said of Léger, we weren't talking of anyone's painting, but he said: " Il sait vivre."

And years later he said of a group of unsatisfactory people: " Ils sont empoisonnés de la gloire." Which I suppose you can translate, " poisoned by a desire to get reputations."

" C'est toujours le beau monde qui gouverne."

The people who know how to live are, so far as my personal existence and contacts have been concerned, mainly great artists (writers, any kind of constructors) or else artists of conspicuous honesty who go their road with that sincerity which is supposed to govern all the work of the scientists.

That is to say they are interested in the WORK being done and the work TO DO, and not in personal considerations, personal petty vanities and so on.

Such impersonality seems to me implicit in fascism, in the *idea statale*.

Given the technical advance, the modern 1933 world of *anno XI dell'era fascista*, the known facts and equations of economics, the known results of certain actions and restrictions of currency, etc.

I have this morning (February 11th) tried to make a " law " or equation covering the new drive in politics or to state the enlightened aim of the differently labelled INTELLIGENT drives and drifts of the *present*.

I. When enough exists, means should be found to distribute it to the people who need it.

(I would very nearly say: " and even to those who merely want to use or consume it, with the emphasis on the last pair of verbs.)

II. It is the business of the nation to see that its own citizens get their share before worrying about the rest of the world.

(This is akin to the Confucian idea that you achieve the good of the world by FIRST achieving good government IN your own country.)

III. When *potential* production (possible production) of anything is sufficient to meet everyone's needs it is the business of the government to see that *both* production *and* distribution are achieved.

Note that in America when there was plenty and more than plenty *of land*, our government handed it out despite Quincy Adams's protests.

This third idea becomes an " idea statale " when I say " it is the business of the government."

But note that Mussolini is NOT a fanatical statalist wanting the state to blow the citizen's nose and monkey with the individual's diet. IF, when and whenever the individual or the industry can and will attend to its own business, the fascist state WANTS the industry and the individual to DO it, and it is only in case of sheer idiocy, incapacity or simple greed and dog-in-the-mangerness that the state intervenes to protect the unorganized PEOPLE; public; you me and the other fellow.

The rest is political " machinery," bureaucracy,

flummydiddle. Jefferson, Mussolini, Lenin, all hated or hate it. Lenin wanted to get rid of it: " All this is political machinery, want to get rid of it," as Stef reported Lenin's opinion in 1918.

Jefferson started to clean up the social flummydiddle, etiquette, precedence, etc.

In a hide-bound Italy, fascism meant at the start DIRECT action, cut the cackle, if a man is a mere s.o.b. don't argue.

Get it into your head that Italy was, even in 1900, immeasurably ahead of England in so far as land laws and the rights of the man who works on the soil are concerned. Some of the follies and cruelties of great English owners would not now be permitted in Italy. Certain kinds of domestic enemy would be shipped to the *confino*.

You can buy and own pretty villas and ancient architectural triumphs, but you can't cut down olive-trees just when you like and you can't drive the " colonno " off his fields. He can, I think, still be your " colonno " instead of the " colonno " of the former proprietor, but you don't by any means own him despite the feudal decorations or courtesy.

Secular habit, picturesque, etc., as in the case of " the sailor." There is, near here, an antient villa, and a nabob therein, and " the sailor " just came and sat in the kitchen where there was plenty of room, he adopted the villa, and he ultimately adopted the chauffeur's seat, etc. That don't prove anything about anything except certain phases of mentality. Servants ask twice as much from people with big houses as from people with cottages and small flats. Primitive sense of equity and justice or Latin common-sense.

XVII

AS TO THE PARTICULAR SITUATION AND THE VIOLATION OF LIBERTIES, TRADITIONAL LIBERTIES, "RIGHTS," ETC.

JEFFERSON had no difficulty about keeping MEN in his country, in fact he found it difficult to imagine ANYone leaving America for Europe (Napoleonic and Royal Europe). When a particular emergency arose he showed no regard for liberties in the declaration of EMBARGO.

Mussolini found himself faced with the inverse situation. Italians had for decades been going abroad to work, they sent back "money" but that did NOT tidy up Italy, it did not drain swamps, improve crops, restore buildings that had been knocked cock-eyed by Napoleon, by the Austrians, and by nature the gradual destroyer of roofs.

In particular France was sucking in the best blood of Italy. Germany noticed it, Germany naturally thought France might as well fill up on more or less consanguineous Germans, rather than on Italians who were wanted at home and on natives from the African continent.

Mussolini saw labour going out of Italy to rebuild France and, still worse, to provide soldiers who would, as soon as the Comité des Forges could wangle it, be ready to provide a home-market for Creusot cannon to shoot no matter whom so long

as they created consumption of metallurgical products.

Gents who make guns like to sell 'em; such is the present state of the world, in the bourgeois demo-liberal anti-Marxian anti-fascist anti-Leninist system.

And as the *Stampa* correspondent has indicated, the selling of guns and powder differs from ALL other industries in that the more you sell the greater the demand for the product. The more goes to consumer A the greater the demand of the other consumers. Hence the love, the loving and tender love of banks for munition works.

France by the so-called peace got a lot of nice iron, nicely there in the ground, to be dug up for profit, and nobody in the Schneider family considered it wrong to want to sell iron, as quickly and as extensively as possible.

Hence the Italian embargo on the Italian population which has for ten years been improving the olde home yard.

Nobody loathes passports more than the present writer, but passports for a purpose are a vastly different matter from passports shoved on to the American people with no shadow of justification whatsoever at an enormous cost to the American public and as, indirectly, a means of presenting American millions of dollars to foreign and often unfriendly nations for NO cause save the fundamental nastiness of several disreputable or half-witted presidents one of whom was THE record-breaking destroyer of the best American institutions; and with no excuse save the half-wittedness of an unthinking and incompetent bureaucracy.

They weren't meant to keep Americans at home for the good of America, they were just a useless annoyance because a diseased president with a one-

track mind liked to show his authority (and didn't care a damn whether his authority was legal or not) and because pus in one part of a government system tends to produce pustulence throughout that system.

Back of Jefferson's embargo and of Mussolini's there was a will for the good of their nations.

In neither man of genius was preconception or theory strong enough to blind the leader to the immediate need.

Even the question of the efficiency of the measures doesn't arise.

Most historians seem to tend to believe that Jefferson's embargo may have done more good than harm, there is no shadow of a doubt whatsoever that Mussolini's embargo has done what the leader intended.

No one denies the material and immediate effect: *grano*, *bonifica*, *restauri*, grain, swamp-drainage, restorations, new buildings, and, I am ready to add off my own bat, AN AWAKENED INTELLIGENCE in the nation and a new LANGUAGE in the debates in the Chamber.

XVIII

ALL right, go to the House of Commons for a display of gas, evasion, incompetence, and then read the *Stampa's* report for 8th January or whenever it was, of Italians getting up and saying what they meant with clarity and even with brevity, or at any rate not stalling and beating about the bush.

And even here is the hand or eye or ear of the Duce, the Debunker par excellence, for the deputies and ministers know that there is an EDITORIAL eye and ear—precisely—an editor, who will see through their bunkum and for whom they will go to the scrap-basket just as quickly as an incompetent reporter's copy will go to the basket in a live editorial office.

As personal testimony to PERSONAL feeling, I feel freer here than I ever did in London or Paris. I am willing to admit my capacity for illusion, but right or wrong, that is my feeling. And as an act or declaration of faith, I do NOT BELIEVE that any constructive effort has been ham-strung in this country since the Marcia su Roma.

As to thought and letters: the Bolsheviki have never been able to live up to the declaration that even they want to permit " fellow-passengers," they have proclaimed that literature is for the state, but they don't mean it as, let us say, I do. I believe that any precise use of words is bound in the long run to be useful to the state and the world at large.

The Duce comes out to meet one in his puncturing of the pretences of party careerists.

Speaking to fascist writers: "A membership ticket in this party does not confer genius on the holder." He was speaking in particular of literary and journalistic ability.

A decent concept of a twentieth century world is like the decent concept of a town or a family, you don't want your neighbour down with cholera; you don't want your family full of sickly members all yowling for help. You don't want the cells in your muscles all squshy and some so weak that one cell grips over and gets out of hand.

If anyone holds the long-distance record for common-sense, that man is Confucius. And the concept I have in mind is: benefit of the world *by means of* good INTERNAL GOVERNMENT of the country.

A squshy and unstable state, particularly in the Italian peninsula, is not an aid to the health of Europe.

A state strung along the Atlantic sea-board in 1800 with an enormous unoccupied hinterland was a very different kettle of onions.

But the types of mind fitted to deal with either, and with unexpected situations in either, are types which may have a very deep kinship which you may perceive if you can but sort out the likenesses underlying.

The shortsighted squeal, they always squeal except when they are being diddled or hypnotized.

XIX

DURING the past twenty years the fundamental capacities of humanity for supplying itself with everything it wants have changed at a geometrical ratio outsoaring anything previous man had guessed at.

Just as the quantity of fertile available land had soared out of the previous bounds of human imagination when Europe had a new continent thrown into her silly lap, and proceeded to play the god-damned drivelling fool, first with a grab for metal that annihilated the Incas, then with a gamble for " colonies," i.e., vast tracts that no nation in Europe at that time was organized to manage.

The putrid idiocy of eighteenth-century European governments is something no normal man can imagine until he has waded through a hundred volumes of the history of that period. The kings and ministers of that day were as idiotic as Otto Kahn or the last Czar of the several Russias, and they saw equally NOT AT ALL into the present.

TEMPERAMENT

I know why my friend the urbane and far more than distinguished jurisconsult is worried, sincerely worried and distressed by fascismo. He has the elegiac mind: as per his " the mistake of my generation was . . ." And he is worried because in his huge cases he don't from one day to another know what the law will be, and all his forty or fifty years

of patient diligent and exacting acute study are likely to go west at any moment as far as immediate utility is concerned.

Mussolini may at any moment find out that some laboured and ingenious device for securing a fair amount of justice in some anterior period and under earlier states of society NO LONGER works, or is no longer capable of giving as much justice as some new rule made to fit the facts of the year ELEVEN, facts, i.e. that have been facts for a short time only.

This is of necessity distressing to a man at the head of his profession, who has got used to being comfortably at the head of his profession; but it is a vastly different distress to that of my father-in-law in England when bothered by Mr. Lloyd George. He was bothered because Lloyd George's laws were framed in such sloppy and ambiguous language that NO ONE, positively no one, could make out what they intended: i.e., they really took the legislative power out of the hands of the legislators and left it for wanglers and pettifoggers, to be construed to the gang's greatest advantage.

There are more ways than one of diddling people, nations, organizations, out of power "by law possessed."

XX

JEFFERSON IN HIS GENERATION

PROBABLY no writer on American history has been more impartial than Woodward, author of *Washington Image and Man*, and certainly no one has had a greater knack for assessing the specific weight of the early notables, without heat, and with insuperable fairness, the fairness of a man who isn't out to prove anything, who hasn't an axe to grind—I don't mean merely a personal axe, but who is simply observer and not a protagonist or an advocate of some next thing to do or some " right course of action."

And this is the fine flower and almost the justification of journalism in America. It is the new ideal of being impartial, and marks the rise of a journalist who isn't taken sufficiently seriously as an historian, who probably doesn't take himself for quite the historian that he is.

You will go far without finding any sounder estimates than his of Jefferson and John Adams, or a better summary than his so brief summary of Jefferson's view. I wonder if I can compass as good a one before citing the letters.

XXI

JEFFERSON didn't believe any nation had the right to contract debts that it couldn't pay off with reasonable effort within nineteen years.

This didn't come into practical politics in his time. He wanted to get rid of slavery, this didn't happen in his time though he took thought to prevent its spreading into the North and West.

He believed in keeping out of European affairs and America was kept out until 1812.

" The cannibals of Europe are eating each other again." That's up-to-date (1932) all right enough. Read Corbaccio's edition of the volume on cannon-touts, it may indicate the spirit of Europe, or of North Europe as distinct from Mediterranean sanity.

For if Rome was a conquering empire, renaissance Italy evolved the doctrine of the balance of power, first for use inside the peninsula. Italy produced notable peacemakers who based their glory on peace tho' it came by the sword, Nic. Este, Cosimo, Lorenzo Medici, even Sforza condottiero, all men standing for order and, when possible, for moderation.

The main line of American conflict for the first half of the last century was the fight between public interest and the interests. Not a showy theatrical shindy. And we end to-day with enlightenment of a Jeffersonian fundamental, transposed, expanded, developed.

" The best place for keeping money is in the pockets of the people."

That does not mean to say that we are to go back to Indian or Burmese hoarding. You must take the text and let time transpose it.

We have had the century of the " benefits of concentration of capital " (and the malefits).

We have come to the point where money must be got into people's pockets if goods are to move and modern life to continue " the good life." All of this is dynamic and mobile and the furthest possible remove from static oriental burial of jewels and silver.

The Hindu buries his metal because he has no trust in public order or the durability of a dynasty and because he wants to hide the money for safety. This course did NOT produce mechanical progress.

But it is very different from the tying up of credit or paper money in banks.

Paper money in the popular pocket would not breed stagnation and it would not stay there for the reasons of oriental hoarding. The *popolano* would want to show it was there. Its distribution would mean greater mobility of goods.

La richezza è lo scambio.

Prosperity comes from exchanging. Old common-place but one that needs constant re-advertising. The French *bas-de-laine* never did any harm, or no harm by comparison with the double-locking and immobilization of credit.

Credit is or was immobilized in India by burial of metal. It is not the means but the end that matters.

Rephrase Jefferson's saying: "The best place for

a nation's reserve of credit is in as many individual pockets as possible."

I think that will probably hold right through the coming change in the system.

If money is ever conceived as certificate of work done there will be no need of taxes. Work done for the state will be paid by state certificate, issued direct, without anyone's needing to cadge around and get it from Bill, Dick and William before paying it to Joe, Mike and Henry.

I have worried considerably over what appears to be the too great ease and simplicity of this proposition. For every bit of DURABLE goods there ought certainly to be a ticket, so that instead of toting the block of rock or the arm-chair you could, with greater ease, tote the ticket and swap it for whatever you at the moment wanted.

But what about perishable goods, stuff that rots and is eaten, can you have spare tickets lying about with nothing to correspond or be delivered, i.e., depreciation in the value of the tickets?

Recorded time has dealt with the underlying equation and perishable goods, grain and foodstuffs have been in times of plenty extremely cheap *by comparison* with permanent goods.

Still if the certificate of work done let us say for the government is only paid out by John to Joe WHEN Joe delivers, i.e., if it only circulates when it moves for value received it could conceivably retain a true value. The unspent notes in John's pocket would not of necessity upset the whole working of a new system, or force people to sell apples at street corners.

There is no reason why this reserve in every-man's pocket should be any more dangerous than

a reserve in a bank. It would be much less likely to freeze.

I suspect that the amount of money paid directly for necessary and desirable public works is about proportionate to that increase of circulating medium which Hume saw as needful for national welfare.

Obviously the minute you had such a system everyone and every gang and combine would run to your congress or your law-chamber howling for jobs, but everyone else would be vastly more alive to the use and meaning of public work, and after the first fever even an elected government might be approved or improved.

At any rate ALL PERMANENT AUGMENTATIONS OF PLANT ought to be paid for in this manner.

(*Pardon digression, the author will retract when proof to the contrary is presented.*)

XXII

C'EST TOUJOURS LE BEAU MONDE QUI GOUVERNE.

ANYONE who has seen the furniture at Schönbrunn ought to understand the flop of the Austrian Empire, and anyone who saw it before the flop ought to have known that the flop was coming.

Frobenius has outstripped other archæologists and explorers

(*a*) because he does not believe things exist without cause;

(*b*) as corollary, because he considered that the *forms* of pottery, etc., had causes.

Franz Josef was one of the most *schifoso* figures of the period remembered by living people, he hadn't even the superficial and tricky brilliance of the unspeakable Hohenzollern. Nasty men have occurred without affecting the course of empire very much, but an age SHOWS in its forms, in its material forms, you can't have the top of an empire stuck in that congeries of an East Side brothel enriched to the n'th during a growing period of a nation.

When the court furnishings get to the level of Koster and Bial's music-hall stage parlour, the empire is on the wane.

Pewk, artistically speaking, is distinguishable by the substitution of expensiveness for design in all

material objects. The great age does not care for cost, it usually manifests at a minimum of material expense and a maximum of cerebral outlay.

However, dropping theory, the bolsheviki brought in a greater care for intellectual life and probably a greater respect for criteria than the Romanoff's supporters had had.

The last time I was in England I went to a party, a Labour Member's party, the mental life was more lively than that at Liberal parties.

When one *beau monde* gets too ditheringly silly or too besottedly ugly, a new and different *beau monde* rises to replace it.

As in a new art movement, I think the vitality shows first in a greater exigence and precision with regard to antiquity, and a break with the conventionally recognized "classic," or accepted great works of the past, whereof the list has always been vitiated, and in the menu of which there are jumbled together the real works and the sham or the hokum.

The Italian awakening began showing itself in two ways.

I. The bookshop windows began to change. In place of the old line, Dante, Petrarch, Tasso and Ariosto, there began to appear slowly translations of Kipling and Dostoievsky and, as the hole in the dyke widened, the torrent of translations good, bad and indifferent, yellow literature, the best Wallace, the worst slop, Wodehouse, woodlouse, etc., but also H. James, Hardy, and a discreet number of books worth reading, though not yet any real criteria nor any successful effort to get the best before the worst. As far as the public is concerned no such effort is apparent in France, England, or America either.

But no one who ever looks in a bookshop window

and who has known such Italian windows for thirty years can fail to have seen the difference, the sign of hunger and curiosity.

II. The restauri. From Sicily up to Ascoli, from one end of the boot to the other, the blobby and clumsy stucco is pried loose from the columns; the pure lines of the romanesque are dug out, the old ineradicable Italian skill shows in the anonymous craftsmen. Three whole columns, six fragments, a couple of capitals are scratched out of a rotten wall, and within a few months the graceful chiostro is there again as it had been in the time of Federigo Secondo.

Someone mentions the Senatore Corrado Ricci and no one knows who else or how many other sensibilities have been employed.

Where other regimes would have haggled and niggled the fascist regime has just gone ahead, without any fireworks whatever. Apart from specialists employed I don't suppose there are ten men in Italy who know as much about these restorations as I do, simply from having dawdled about the peninsula looking at what was in front of me. It is not merely a matter of FILLING IN the old gaps with concrete. It is a reconquest of an ancient skill, such as I saw the head artisan using in Teramo or in Ascoli Piceno up in the mountains over there by the Adriatic " where nobody goes."

The term " gerarchia " is perhaps the beginning of a critical sense, *vide* the four tiles and the dozen or so bits of insuperable pottery, pale blue on pale brownish ground, in the ante-room of the Palazzo Venezia.

XXIII

RESISTANCE

JEFFERSON writing to Adams (or vice versa) noted that before their time hardly anyone had bothered to think about political organization or the organization of government. Same in our time *re* economics. It is a new subject. Bankers who control it *de facto* make no claims to be more than artisans, practising habits which *have* worked.

When there is a shindy they hire touts, either shallow or dishonest, to embroil and confuse discussion. The little real thought of the past twenty years has been almost subterranean. When it does force itself into the light one jams against various sorts of inertia, the fighting inertia of those who've GOT the swag and are in panic terror of losing it, the indifferent, and the fellows who think half-way through and then stop.

Some can tell the root from the branch, the most common failure is the failure to dissociate necessity from habit.

Thus a correspondent *re* the book *Mercanti di Cannoni*:

> "To take a more immediate example, the *STAMPA'S* article shows that the French Government at the behest of interested manufacturers, is squandering colossal sums on fortifications. It

is not argued, I take it, that these fortifications are intended for offensive purposes, or that they constitute a menace of war against any neighbouring state. The most that can be said, so far as these particular armaments are concerned, is that they represent a gigantic waste of the French taxpayer's money. That is too bad for the French taxpayer, but seems no reason for alarm in other countries.

"On the contrary, holding as I do that the success (such as it is) of our present system of production and distribution is based upon waste, I cannot avoid concluding that the more waste the better, and that nothing could possibly be so beneficial to humanity as a whole (within the limits of our existing economic system) as the undertaking by all countries to build a ring of solid steel forts around their frontiers. It would provide work for the workless and huge profits for everybody concerned, with the consequence that we should have a wave of world prosperity alongside which the boom years of 1928–9 would look like a panic.

"You may say that the same result might be accomplished by building a great pumping system to pump the water out of the Indian Ocean and carry it by steamers (or perhaps pipe lines) into the Atlantic. I agree. In fact this latter plan would have the advantage. The work would never be finished and therefore the prosperity would be endless.

"The trouble is that most people would think the latter scheme was foolish."

I send this to A. R. Orage as encouragement, and as sign of the progress of enlightenment. I get a further communiqué from the sender, and he falls

flop into catalogued fallacy, possibly from haste, confusion of office work, etc. From a discussion of effects which of necessity follow certain causes he falls into a description of what has been, without apparently perceiving the difference in the nature of the two cases.

So far as political economy is concerned the modern world contains the work of Lenin and Henry Ford, of C. H. Douglas and Mussolini, the somewhat confused results of Veblen and the technocrats, this latter, as I have indicated, is confused because it has been in large part surreptitious. Done under or near a subsidy it either has not had any moral force and direction, or the individuals who had any have had to conceal it and profess to be concerned WHOLLY with mechanical problems.

Ford professed to be concerned wholly with commercial and manufacturing problems, though he has recently mentioned human rights in a garbled outbreak against technocracy.

I suppose the term means to him merely putting an incompetent professor in control of his (Ford's) business.

Genius, as I had recently occasion to say apropos Francisci's work with a ciné-camera, is the capacity to see ten things where the ordinary man sees one, and where the man of talent sees two or three, PLUS the ability to register that multiple perception in the material of his art.

When the nit-wits complained of Jefferson's superficiality it merely amounted to their non-perception of the multitude of elements needed to start any decent civilization in the American wilderness: learning, architecture, art that registered con-

temporary phenomena instead of merely distorting them into received convention, seed of the right sort, transportation, responsibility, resilience in the individual and in the local group.

Washington could see mathematics from the ground end, geometry in its initial sense, measuring of the earth. Quincy Adams took it as astronomy, furthest possible remove from all human contact or human "pollution," as I suppose all human quality may appear to a man suffering from puritanitis.

Jefferson was *polumetis*, many-minded, and as literature wasn't his main job, this multiplicity is now recorded item by item in his letters, one interest at a time, and the unreflective reader gets simply the sense of leisure without perceiving the essential dynamism of the man who did *get things* DONE.

Suppose Jefferson had had to be both Jefferson and Pat Henry, or both John Adams and Jas. Otis? In the first place he probably couldn't have, and in the second, my phrase is only an attempt to make the far-distant reader understand at least some part of what Mussolini's job is and has been.

America had the luck to start with Sam and J. Adams, Franklin, etc. The liberation and the creation all occurred more or less in unbroken sequence. Italy had a risorgimento, a shaking from lethargy, a partial unification, then a forty-year sleep, from which the next heave has been the work of one man, pre-eminently, with only here and there a notable, perhaps a very temporary, assistance.

There is an analogy, from 1800 onward America was Jefferson's work, Madison had been and con-

tinued to be very useful, Gallatin was helpful in his way, Van Buren went on in the '30's.

Theodore Dentatus Roosevelt might have made up twenty per cent. of a fair Mussolini, but I can't believe anybody was quite ready to go out and die for dear Theodore.

XXIV

A GOOD government is one that operates according to the best that is known and thought.

And the best government is that which translates the best thought most speedily into action.

Such translation is undoubtedly more swift and dramatic when a nation has slipped behind and has merely to catch up with the pacemakers. Thus the leaps of Russia and Italy in many matters of detail.

Nevertheless Mussolini has a more responsive instrument than any other I can think of, something does appear to get started with " bewildering frequency," grain, swamps, birds, yes, gentle reader, birds, there are more birds in the olive-yards, " birds friendly to agriculture." W. H. Hudson wrote a lot about the subject, the aged Munthe wrote a book about Capri, but the BOSS does something about it.

That is what makes him so *simpatico*. He is *simpatico* as Picabia was *simpatico*, though Francis had apparently no sense of responsibility (which merely means that his sense of responsibility was far far, oh very far, from normal human perceptions, but at any rate Picabia had no sense of *immediate* social responsibility).

I am now trying to get a personal point of departure.

I am not talking about Picabia's last show of paintings or about any exposition of painting but of a personal impression of the whole man whom I

knew in 1922 and along then, a man intellectually dangerous, so that it was exhilarating to talk to him, as it would be exhilarating to be in a cage full of leopards. As he is not initially either a writer or a painter this has often been hard to explain. He was the first man I ever met who seemed to me to have ANY capacity for dealing with abstract ideas, or, still better, his mind moved instantly from a given phenomenon to the general equation under which one would ultimately have to group it.

You do not wonder where a thing is when you can see it.

All genius worries the dud, I think, by reason of the overplus. You will not get another Gaudier-Brzeska because such a sculptor can not exist save when the lively general intelligence and the formal perception are combined with the drive to ceaseless animal action.

I think sitting still or reclining, and relax playing tennis. The sculptor concentrates all his intelligence WHILE in physical action. The mere stone-cutter, or worse, the modeller, hasn't any intelligence to concentrate, and so forth.

Spectamur agendo. We know what the artist does, we are, or at any rate the author is, fairly familiar with a good deal of plastic and verbal manifestation.

Transpose such sense of plasticity or transpose your criteria to ten years of fascismo in Italy. And to the artifex. If you are engaged seriously in judgment or measurement.

We still respect the Code Napolèon and the architecture of Monticello, and those of us who know it probably respect the constitution of the University of Virginia, as it was before some of T.J.'s provisions were deleted.

XXV

DURING ten years I have heard attacks on fascismo, violent at first and then with continuing diminuendos, nearly always on what seemed to me irrelevant details, though occasionally I have met with a raking broadside, as for example the Russian's " BUT it belongs to them," meaning that the Russian state belongs to the people.

Only it don't, it belongs to the bolsheviki, and in any case I don't see the effect of such ownership.

Secondly, Orage's admission that Italy was better run or more efficiently run than any other country, but he followed this by a claim that it was just being neatly tied up in a bag for delivery to the international sonzov.

Which I simply do not believe. You can't *prove* by Euclid what Mussolini intends to do the year after the year after next but you can use some sort of common sense or general intuition. I see no basis whatsoever for Orage's prediction. Everything perceptible to me appears to indicate the diametrical opposite.

In 1920 I saw nothing in Europe save unscrupulous bankers, a few gangs of munitions vendors, and their implements (human).

Such things have happened before. I didn't then know so much about it, and the history of the American 1830's is not a popular subject. Italy was perhaps more openly menaced. Her peril may have been, probably was, greater than that of the

" stronger " countries where the infamy could pull with silk threads.

The first act of the fascio was to save Italy from people too stupid to govern, I mean the Italian communists, the Lenin-less communists. The second act was to free it from parliamentarians, possibly worse, though probably no more dishonest than various other gangs of parliamentarians, but at any rate from groups too politically immoral to govern.

As far as financial morals are concerned, I should say that from being a country where practically everything and anything was for sale, Mussolini has in ten years transformed it into a country where it would even be dangerous to try to buy out the government.

In other countries they excuse inexplicable perfidies by saying " These men are personally honest." I am now quoting an admiral: " All I know is that all these men are my personal friends and I assure you that they are *personally* honest." The implication being that they play the super-crooks' game because they are stupid and hoodwinked.

A capacity for being hoodwinked is not in itself a qualification for ruling.

It is, let us admit, often a means of getting office in countries where office is elective.

Jefferson thought the live men would beat out the cat's-paws.

The fascist hate of demo-liberal governments is based on the empiric observation that in many cases they don't and have not.

My next analogy is very technical. The real life in regular verse is an irregular movement underlying. Jefferson thought the formal features of the American system would work, and they did work till the time of General Grant but the condition of

their working was that inside them there should be a *de facto* government composed of sincere men willing the national good. When the men of understanding are too lazy to impart the results of their understanding, and when the nucleus of the national mind hasn't the moral force to translate knowledge into action I don't believe it matters a damn what legal forms or what administrative forms there are in a government. The nation will get the staggers.

And any means are the right means which will remagnetize the will and the knowledge.

THE CIVIL WAR drove everything out of the American mind. Perhaps the worst bit of damage was that it drove out of mind the first serious anti-slavery candidate, not because he was an anti-slavery candidate, but because he saved the nation and freed the American treasury. Jackson had the glory, let us say he got the glory because he already had a good deal, the aureole of New Orleans, and Van Buren caught the reaction. His autobiography didn't get printed until 1918 or 1920.

Whether by reason of villainy I know not. I suspect it was due more to stupidity and to the laziness and ineptitude of professors. You can't expect history professors to be connoisseurs of economic significance, at least they weren't to be trusted for it from 1860 to 1930.

I have already started to put the bank war into a canto. I don't know whether to leave it at that, or to quote sixty pages of " Van's " autobiography.

" I suppose they'll blame it on Van," said General Jackson.

Mr. Van Buren pointed out the discrepancy between the funds at the president's disposal, and the funds at the bank's disposal. He pointed out the

discrepancies of Dan'l Webster. And when he had really finished *that* job he quit writing.

A lot of economics that mankind (the tiny advance guard of mankind) has learned in the last twenty years with toil, sorrow, and persistence, they might have lapped up from that unprinted manuscript of Van Buren's.

(Autobiography of Martin Van Buren. Annual report of the American Historical Association, 1918, Vol. 2, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1920.)

"Forty millions had been the average amount of the loans of the bank. In October 1830 they stood at $40,527,532. Between January 1831 and May 1832 they were increased to $70,428,007; the highest figure ever reached. The amount of its outstanding discounts between the periods mentioned was thus increased about 30 millions, saying nothing of the increase which took place between May, the date to which the report of the Bank was extended, and July when the veto was interposed. This extraordinary and reckless step was taken without even a pretence of a change in the business of the country to justify, much less to require, so great a change in the extent of its credits."

There is a good deal of such statement in the autobiography, all Chaldaic to the man in the street, but taken in its place, context, relations, very good reading to the modern economist, and marvellously convincing testimony to the clear-headedness of Jefferson's most notable pupil.

Step by step the story of the recent American crisis can be read in last century's story, simple transposition serving mostly for parallel. Read "land" where you now read "industry," the finance is the same. Inflation, deflation, boobs

buying on the inflate and getting crunched by the deflate.

In one sense American history or the history of American development runs from Jefferson through Van Buren and then takes a holiday; or is broken by a vast parenthesis, getting rid of the black chattel slavery, and then plunging fairly into unconsciousness.

We were diddled out of the heritage Jackson and Van Buren left us. The real power just oozed away from the electorate. The *de facto* government became secret, nobody cared a damn about the *de jure*. The people grovelled under Wilson and Harding, then came the nit-wit and the fat-face.

Wilson betrayed whatever was left of the original ideals of our government. The most typical story of the Woodrovian spirit as it permeated from the chief stench through the lesser crannies of administration is the tale of Van Dine, a long Hollander who had drifted into Chicago a bit before 1917, and had applied for American citizenship; he got a tax form, describing him as an alien, subject to certain imposts, and he got called up for army service. He said to the judge: " I am perfectly willing to serve in the army, but if I am citizen enough to serve in the army I've got a right not to be taxed as a foreigner."

The judge (or jedge) leaned over his desk and whinnied: " Seay, yeng feller, deon't yew know thet in THIS KENTRY there ain't naowbody that'z got enny garr' DAMN rights whotsoever! "

Is it a crisis IN the system, or is the system in crisis?

How does the Jeffersonian answer the fascist in a.d. 1933, 157 of American independence, 144 of the republic, XI of the era fascista?

This is not to say I " advocate " fascism in and for America, or that I think fascism is possible in America without Mussolini, any more than I or any enlightened bolshevik thinks communism is possible in America without Lenin.

I think the American system *de jure* is probably quite good enough, if there were only 500 men with guts and the sense to USE it, or even with the capacity for answering letters, or printing a paper.

XXVI

POWER

THE millenniar habit of slavery and the impulse toward enslaving others is very strong in the race. By the time chattel-slavery was driven out by the American Civil War, it had been discovered that paid labour probably cost less to the employer.

Some men are now struggling to convince the mob that the machine is ready to replace the slave.

The greatest obstacle may well be just simple bossiness, bos, bovis, the bull, likes to order some fellow-human about.

The " will to power " (admired and touted by the generation before my own) was literatureifyed by an ill-balanced hysterical teuto-pollak. Nothing more vulgar, in the worst sense of the word, has ever been sprung on a dallying intelligentsia.

Power is necessary to some acts, but neither Lenin nor Mussolini show themselves primarily as men thirsting for power.

The great man is filled wth a very different passion, the will toward *order*.

Hence the mysteries and the muddles in inferior minds.

The superior passion is incompatible with Dogberry and the local bully. The second line of inferiority complex (professorial) toddles in with its twaddle about insanity and genius, and "the man must be mad."

Five or six years ago the Roman barflies and social idiots were waiting for Mussolini to go mad.

The brittle mind, living on prejudice or privilege, as a last refuge plays ostrich. Something is NOT what it's mamma or schoolmarm told it, and it simply can't readjust itself.

When Mussolini has expressed any satisfaction it has been with the definite act performed, the art-work in the civic sense, the leading the Romans back to the sea, for example, by the wide new road into Ostia.

So Shu, king of Soku, built roads. What sort of shouting would the Chinese have raised for the release of the Lake of Abano, an exhilaration that might perfectly well have upset a considerable equanimity?

FREUD OR . . .

As one of the Bloomsbury weepers once remarked, "Freud's writings may not shed much light on human psychology but they tell one a good deal about the private life of the Viennese."

They are flower of a deliquescent society going to pot. The average human head is less in need of having something removed from it, than of having something inserted.

The freudized ex-neurasthenic, oh well, pass it for the neurasthenic, but the general results of Freud are Dostoievskian duds, worrying about their own unimportant innards with the deep attention of Jim drunk occupied with the crumb on his weskit.

I see no advantage in this system over the ancient Roman legion, NO individual worth saving is likely to be wrecked by a reasonable and limited obedience practised to given ends and for limited

periods. So much for commandments to the militia as superior to psychic sessions for the debilitated.

That which makes a man forget his bellyache (physical or psychic) is probably as healthy as concentration of his attention on the analysis of the products or educts of a stomach-pump.

Modern ignorance, fostered and intensified by practically all university systems has succeeded in obliterating or in dimming the old distinction in Rodolpho Agricola's *De Dialectica.*

Verbal composition is committed, " ut doceat, ut moveat, ut delectet."

Verbal composition exists to three ends, to teach, to move and to please. You do not aid either literary or philosophical discussion by criticizing one sort with criteria properly applied to the other.

We know that the German university system was perverted from the search for truth (material truth in natural research) into a vast machine for conducting the mental segment of the nation AWAY from actual problems, getting them embedded and out of the way of the tyrants.

American subsidized universities have become anodyne in the departments that " don't matter," i.e. those where the subject has not or need not have any direct incidence on life.

When it comes to economic study the interference of the controllers is less covered.

I am no longer " in touch." I know that professors are occasionally " fired." I have heard that the ladies' Vassar once had a curiosity in the form of a heavy endowment " for as long as nothing contrary to protective tariff was taught there."

The instinct of self-preservation, obviously THE great passion in the bureaucratic booZUM, leads

often towards the anodyne. Such is the nature of bureaucracy. Once IN, it is hardly possible to be ousted for incompetence. So long as you aren't noticed you STAY there, promotion is in any case slow. Soft paws, quiet steps, look and listen.

This has even bred the careerist in scholarship, the man who carefully studies WHAT KIND of anodyne bunk will lead him upward in the system, or best assure his income.

I have met various specimens, one definitely producing bunk to " get ahead," another mildly discontented with the dullness of work which was at any rate safe, and couldn't by any stretch of fancy lead one into an opinion on anything save its own dullness and, by comparison with any intellectual pursuit, its lack of use. Naturally he felt the need of his income.

Thus ultimately the makers of catalogues, etc., undeniably useful but undeniably giving a very low YIELD in intellectual life, or to the intellectual life of the nation.

In fact the idea of intellectual life IN an American University is usually presented as a joke by people with what is called a sense of humour.

When an experiment is made or advocated it is usually attributed (often correctly) to " cranks."

A crank in " this pragmatical pig of a world " as Wm. Yeats has ultimately come to designate the Celto-Saxon segments of the planet, is any man having ANY other ambition save that of saving his own skin from the tanners.

An inventor stops being a crank when he has made, i.e. acquired, money, or when he has been exploited by someone who has.

Henry Ford is the best possible type of crank (taken in his *fort intérieur*), Henry himself was visible

in his early days, but once inside the caterpillared tank of success his mental make-up is forgotten.

The fact that it often takes a series of two, three, or four cranks to get a thing done blinds the general reader to the utility of the successive components.

" C'est beau." said Fernand Léger in the best defence of the French republic I have ever heard. " C'est beau, it is good to look at because it works without there being anyone of interest or importance, any ' great man ' necessary to make it function."

It's " beau " all right, but dear old Fernand wasn't looking at the Comité des Forges, which might appear to come nearer to being the real government of France than the gents in the Deputés and the figurehead at the Elysées. The Comité has got its dictatorship and its one-party system.

All without public responsibility. Our own country when finally betrayed by Wilson also showed from its secret internal workings, not only the financiers who had some sort of responsibility, private if not public, but the *louche* figure of State Militia " Colonel " House skulking from here to there with no responsibility whatsodamnever.

Disgust with Wilson, unimpeached, bred a reaction against having " a strong man in the White House " and we suffered the three deficients, and Heaven knows what the present (as H. Mencken defines him) " weak sister " will offer us.

The problem of democracy is whether its alleged system, its *de jure* system, can still be handled by the men of good will; whether real issues as distinct from red herrings CAN be forced into the legislatures (House and Senate), and whether a sufficiently active

segment of the public can be still persuaded to combine and compel its elected delegates to act decently in an even moderately intelligent manner.

Damn the bolsheviki as much as you like, the Russian *projects* have served as stimuli BOTH to Italy and to America. Our democratic system is, for the first time, on trial against systems professing greater care for national welfare.

It becomes increasingly difficult to show WHY great schemes, Muscle Shoals etc., should be exploited for the benefit of someone in particular instead of for the nation as a whole.

It becomes, in fact it has become, utterly impossible to show that the personal resilience of the individual is less, or the scope of individual action, his fields of initiative, is any more limited, under Mussolini than under our pretendedly republican system.

The challenge of Mussolini to America is simply:

Do the driving ideas of Jefferson, Quincy Adams, Van Buren, or whoever else there is in the creditable pages of our history, FUNCTION *actually in the America of this decade to the extent that they function in Italy under the* DUCE*?*

The writer's opinion is that they DON'T, and that nothing but vigorous realignment will make them, and that if, or when, they are made so to function, Mussolini will have acted as stimulus, will have entered into American history, as Lenin has entered into world history.

That don't, or don't necessarily, mean an importation of the details of mechanisms and forms more adapted to Italy or to Russia than to the desert of Arizona or to the temperament of farms back of

Baaaston. But it does definitely mean an orientation of will.

The power lust of Wilson was that of a diseased and unbalanced man who before arriving at the White House had had little experience of the world. The job of being a college president in a fresh-water town, the petty hypocrisies necessary to being an example to the young, are about as good preparation for political life as that of being abbot in a monastery.

XXVII

PAIDEUMA

I AM not laying pretence to impartiality, neither do I believe a certain kind of impartiality makes the best record. I know of no more unpleasant figure in history than the late Franz Josef. Usually a public detestable has some private offset. But of this nullity there is not even record of private pleasantness. And if there's anything in Frobenius' mode of thinking, a people who could tolerate such an emperor and an emperor who could put up with such furniture were well ready for the ash-can.

Brancusi is not an Italian, nor have the Italians a Brancusi. It would be difficult to defend the contemporary pubk. muniments in ANY country. Germany is wholly avenged on France by the American marble atrocity at . . . A bile specialist would be puzzled by the stone slop in the Luxembourg Garden.

I do not think the best men are excluded in Italy, some of the sane principles are already accepted, the idea of steel, aluminium, glass, contemporary material, is accepted.

St. Elia died before the new era, but it is perfectly on the cards that IF he has left any designs suitable for public construction they might any day be used, not only as architect's plans but as memorial to St. Elia.

Any smart schoolboy can make fun of some detail or other in Marinetti's campaigns, but the same clever sneer-sprouter would find it much more difficult to match the mass record of Marinetti's life, even if you limit it to his campaigning for public education in æsthetics and omit the political gestures, which any good writer might envy. You must judge the whole man by the mass of the man's results.

As with d'Annunzio, anyone can repeat jokes about hairwash, but until the dilettante writer has held up the combined rascals of Europe, he had best confine his criticism of Gabriele to questions of stylistic embroidery.

I do not believe I am any more impressed by rhetoric than is Mr. Hemingway, I may have a greater capacity for, or sympathy with, general ideas (provided they have a bearing on what I consider good action) but Gabriele as aviator has shown just as much nerve as any of dear Hem's pet bull-bashers.

XXVIII

"OF BEING RULED"

THE last state of degradation whether of a democratized or of a non-democratized people is that in which they begin to wail to be dominated. DISTINGUISH between fascism which is organization, with the organizer at its head, to whom the power has not been GIVEN, but who has organized the power, and the state of America, where the Press howls that we should GIVE power to Roosevelt, i.e., to a weak man, or a man generally supposed to be weak, a man who has shown NO UNDERSTANDING whatsoever, and no knowledge whatsoever of contemporary actuality. One can't tell whether this howl proceeds from terrorized banderlog, or from pimps paid so to howl in the interests of the hidden *coup d'état-ists*, but this will to give up one's rights is at the opposite pole from the action of the fascio in 1921–2 when their drive was precisely to maintain order and a state of civilization and NOT to have it overridden by one party or diddled into nonentity by corruption.

The degradation in America is phenomenal in that legally the machinery for local resilience EXISTS, all the cadres, frames for local organization are nicely plotted out, many of them have functioned, but the populace AND the intelligentsia are now too lazy, cowardly or ignorant to make any use of them.

Occasionally South Dakota or some incult western state informs the world that it has its own legislature, but the efforts of this kind are neither coherent nor very enlightened.

Why it should be supposed that a " soviet " would function where extant deliberative bodies do not is somewhat beyond me. Simply: the soviet is not the direct line for the U.S.A. Half the energy required to change a state legislature into a soviet would recharge the extant form and make it function IF there were the prerequisite skill and knowledge.

And in any case you can't GIVE power. Give authority to a nincompoop and you merely step into chaos. Which is presumably what the fishers in troubled waters desire, ever and always desire.

The extent to which you can even DELEGATE power is probably limited by laws as definite as those which govern the strength of current you can send through an electric wire of given thickness and texture.

Democracy is composed one-third of peasant pessimism, one-third of *laissez-aller*, of utter indifference.

You do not give power to a soft-head like Harding by making him president, any more than you could make Coolidge into an intellect. " Al," who as a journalist demonstrates once a week his unfitness for a place even in the cabinet, gave a touching tribute to Coolidge, on the lines of " Vaaal, he vas a goot schmoker." Cal wasn't a demagogue, how noble of him to avoid that pitfall and confute the detractors of democracy. Cal got on by a very simple predestined process. He never aroused ANYone's inferiority complex. Ditto Harding.

Ditto, presumably, Roosevelt the second. Nothing is more frequent in committee work and in demo-

cratic wangles and even in choosing editors than for a man who is strongish but not strong enough, to boost up some wobbler whom he thinks he can guide. Wilson was a great disappointment to some of his backers, as Taft to Theodore.

As I learned from my meeting with Griffiths: A leader who is not supported by legal machinery is more bound by the general will of his party than an elected official who has legal forms to fall back on.

Mussolini has steadily refused to be called anything save "Leader" (Duce) or "Head of the Government," the term dictator has been applied by foreign envy, as the Tories were called cattle-stealers. It does not represent the Duce's fundamental conception of his role.

His authority comes, as Eirugina proclaimed authority comes, "from right reason" and from the general fascist conviction that he is more likely to be right than anyone else is.

In the commandments to the militia this phrase is no more than the President being Supreme Chief of the American Armies in war time or any general on the field having full commanding powers. Or rather, it is more, in the sense that the militia are given a reason for their obedience.

XXIX

KUNG

AS to the mysteries of genius, I am reproved for citing Confucius, though the Ta Hio is only thirty-two pages long. I am told the reader won't have a copy and that I ought to print it in an appendix, OR tell the reader what it means. Truly, people desire a great deal for very little.

The doctrine of Confucius is:

That you bring order into your surroundings by bringing it first into yourself; by knowing the motives of your acts.

That you can bring about better world government by amelioration of the *internal* government of your nation.

That private gain is not prosperity, but that the treasure of a nation is its equity.

That hoarding is not prosperity and that people should employ their resources.

One should respect intelligence, " the luminous principle of reason," the faculties of others, one should look to a constant renovation.

" Make it new, make it new as the young grass shoot."

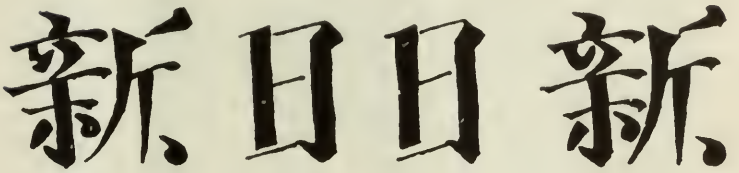
One should not be content with the second-rate, applying in all of these the first principle, namely the beginning with what is nearest to hand, that is, one's own motives and intelligence. You could further assert that Kung taught that organization is

not forced on to things or on to a nation from the outside inward, but that the centre holds by attraction.

" The humane ruler acquires respect by his spending, the inhumane, disrespect, by his taking."

Shallow critics fail to understand ideas because they look on ideas as a stasis, a statement in a given position, and fail to look where it leads. The people who fail to take interest in Kung fail, I think, because they never observe WHAT Confucian thinking leads to.

For 2,500 years, whenever there has been order in China or in any part of China, you can look for a Confucian at the root of it.



Confucius on " La rivoluzione continua."

King Tching T'ang on Government. Part of the inscription on the king's bath-tub cited by Kung in the Ta Hio II. I.

The first ideogram (on the right) shows the fascist axe for the clearing away of rubbish (left half) the tree, organic vegetable renewal. The second ideograph is the sun sign, day,

" renovate, day by day renew."

The verb is used in phrases: to put away old habit, the daily increase of plants, improve the state of, restore.

XXX

JEFFERSON has a reputation for having made excessive statements, which might happen to any voluble man if a few of his remarks were perpetually considered apart from their context, and apart from the occasions when they were published and the contrary excess they were designed to correct.

The " free and equal " is limited by the passive verb " born," it was directed against special privileges of those " first-born " and to those whose legal fathers were Dukes, Earls, etc.

There is not the least shadow of suspicion that T.J. ever supposed that men remained equal or were biologically equal, or had a right to equality save in opportunity and before the law.

Like every leader and constructor in human history he tried to bring a certain number of men up to a certain level, by elimination of certain defects.

The so-called intellectual or spiritual leader guns after defects at long range, the political constructor goes for those which are the worst damned immediate nuisances.

Apart from the Declaration of Independence to which T.J. gave the final form, Jefferson's doctrines might be divided into.

A. What he thought good for the new American republic.

B. What he considered sound principles for the state.

As to this second division.

1. He disbelieved in hereditary privilege, i.e. he thought men should govern by reason of their inherent qualities and not because they were sons of papa.

" O poca digna nobiltà di sangue," as Dante had once, and some time previously, remarked.

2. He thought that a nation had no right to contract debts that couldn't be reasonably paid within the lifetime of the parties contracting.

Which is part of his main contention that THE EARTH BELONGS TO THE LIVING.

3. That everything that can be done by informal and individual effort should be so done and that the state should govern only where and when necessary.

4. He was the champion of " free speech " but suggested that newspapers be printed in three sections, the first and VERY BRIEF section to be headed " FACTS," the second to be headed " Probabilities," and the third part to be headed " Lies."

Given this limitation I think the Duce might be inclined to agree with him.

5. He believed in peace, but he believed still more strongly in maintaining peace UNTIL America was strong enough to stand a war without disaster, and when war came in 1812 he expected the American army to win it. Though the frigates did most of the work.

6. His fight for the " constitution " was a fight against John Marshall, and against the reactionaries who believed in the British Constitution. There was no question of his resisting any further DEVELOPMENTS in government based on the experience of 150 years of democracy, 100 years of

Marxian arguments and of machinery, or twenty years of industrial engineering.

7. He did not jeopardize his power by untimely fights for his " higher beliefs " at a time when it would have been impossible to carry them into practical effect. I can think of only two such " ideals," one the abolition of slavery, and the other the far more distant ethics of debt.

8. His expressions *re* finance are not always less explicit than Van Buren's. *Vide* this passage *re* Gallatin:

" I know he derived immense convenience from it (the Bank) because they gave the *effect of ubiquity to his money*. Money in New Orleans or Maine was at his command, and by their agency transformed in an instant into money in London, in Paris, Amsterdam, or Canton. He was, therefore, cordial to the bank. I often pressed him to divide the public deposits among all the respectable banks, being indignant myself at the open hostility of that institution to a government on whose treasures they were fattening."

This paragraph was manifestly written neither by a fanatic blinded to the use, nor by a simpleton blind to the abuses, of financing. He goes on to stigmatize the attacks on Gallatin as intended to " drive from the administration the ablest man except the president."

Simple and perfectly just statement, showing well-developed sense of the *gerarchia* (hierarchy) in nature.

9. Freedom from cliché in economic speculation shows in a letter to Crawford (1816). Perhaps only a " New " economist can appreciate it to the full:

> " . . . and if the national bills issued be bottomed (as is indispensable) on pledges of specific taxes for their redemption within certain

and moderate epochs, and be of *proper denominations* for *circulation*, no interest on them would be necessary or just, because they would answer to every one of the purposes of the metallic money withdrawn and replaced by them."

10. As for government SUPERVISION of finance, I find this in the " Anas " (Vol. I, page 277) (All references to Memorial Assn. Edtn. of 1905) *re* the First Bank of the U.S.:

" While the government remained at Philadelphia a selection of members of both Houses were constantly kept as directors who, on every occasion interesting to that institution, or to the *views of the federal head* voted at the will of that head; and together with the stock-holding members, could always make the federal vote that of the majority."

This was the bank in Federal hands, i.e., opposed to Jefferson, but an " engine of " Hamilton during Washington's administration. That is to say: during the first administrations there was *national control* of the *national finances*. This ceased when the administration changed WITHOUT there being a corresponding change in the control of the bank.

Thereafter the fights against the First and Second Banks of the U.S. were fights to keep the control of the nation's finance out of control by a clique and to attain the use of the national resources for the benefit of the whole nation.

Most of the " great questions " (local improvements, etc.) grouped along this main issue: grafters *vs.* the men of public spirit, with a surprisingly small percentage of cases where there was a difference of opinion as to what was really for the good of the public.

11. To Eppes in 1813 he clearly expresses the view

that the nation should own its paper money and condemns the abuse of the individual states in handing over this function to private banks.

" Issued bills . . . bearing no interest . . . never depreciated a single farthing."

12. " No one has a natural right to the trade of a money-lender, but he who has money to lend."

So obvious, so simple, so supposed by the lay reader to represent an actual state of things even now, but so devastating an impediment to banking malpractice as habitual during the whole of all our present lives.

All of which drags us deep into special discussion and probably has no place in a book of this general nature.

But the serious student of economics is recommended to study the series of letters to Eppes.

Again on 11th September, 1813:

IF THE UNITED STATES were in possession of the circulating medium AS THEY OUGHT TO BE, they could redeem what they could borrow dollar for dollar and in ten annual instalments, whereas the USURPATION OF THAT FUND by bank paper, obliging them to borrow elsewhere at 7½%, two dollars are required to reimburse one.

He had read Hume and Adam Smith and notes that S. is the chief advocate of paper circulation *on the sole* condition that it be strictly regulated.

13. Taken in this order the following paragraph sounds almost like an echo of the Duce (hysteron proteron):

> " Here are a set of people for instance who have bestowed on us the great blessing of running in our debt about two hundred millions of dollars, *without our knowing who they are, where they*

are, or what property they have to pay this debt when called on."

14. He did not believe that "public debt is a public blessing."

15. He is Confucian in a letter to T. Cooper, January 1814, on the vast value of internal commerce and the disproportionate interest taken in foreign.

16. To J. Adams, July 1815, he speaks of "Napoleon knowing nothing of commerce, political economy or civil government."

The first two are strictures confirmed by reputable record, though one may rather doubt whether Mr. Jefferson would have left the third had he revised the letter, or rather, he wouldn't have omitted it, but would have defined his meaning.

XXXI

THE SOIL

YOU cannot found any permanent system on American special practice between 1776 and 1900. The peasants of Europe had wanted land, land in America down to my own time was free to anyone who would take the trouble to go where open land was and cultivate it.

Needless to say Europe had not known any such state of affairs, even during the epoch of tribal migrations.

The error presumably was that the ownership was not limited to the time during which the "claim" was actually used.

Q. Adams wanted to reserve the national riches for the nation, for higher developments, scientific research, etc.

As said, this would have delayed the settlement of the continent indefinitely, the other party wanted land QUICK and indulged in no fancies of foresight. One of the lures of cultivating 160 acres was the chance to sell it later and go somewhere else.

Thus as usual in history the root is overlooked. Half mankind from myopia don't see, and when there is a gang of scoundrels, managing demos they learn to erect false dilemmas, camouflage, smoke-screens, political issues "made" simply to divert the electorate and keep them from discovering the real issues. Thus the utter and drivelling imbecility

of the XVIII amendment in our distressed fatherland, and the bunkum about national ownership of coal-mines and three-quarters of all liberal and tory proposals in England.

The point is that for over a century the American government indulged in a continual *donation* of land. Not a share out or division of the national land or certificates of claim on the land proportionately, but 160 acres or a variant for special kinds* of land, timber, mining, to prospective USERS.

It should be obvious that with this vast resource no great " ECONOMY " or precision was needed in running the country.

Nevertheless human greed and imbecility made a crisis. Pass over the difficulties of starting the republic 1786 to 1810. By 1830 the nation existed. Land was obviously and spectacularly abundant. Marxian " value " lying potential in LABOUR needed no demonstration. AND YET they had inflation, panic, and all the theatrical adjuncts of contemporary " post-war " 1920 to 1930 Europe, America and the Occident.

The First Bank having gone anti-national, i.e. having been national as a federalist institution WHEN the federalists were " IN," remained federalist when the Jeffersonians came into office, and no longer represented the national will in finance. It was annihilated. A second bank was rigged up after another war.

It took all Jackson's military popular prestige and Van Buren's brains and persistence to get the nation out of its talons. Van Buren wrote out the story in 1860 and it stayed unprinted till 1920.

The story in SCARE HEADS:

Immigrants started out with paper money which

* Limits from 640 desert to a bit over five acres mining.

was " good money," and found it worthless at the end of their journey.

The Bank issued " racers," i.e. drafts that took several months or weeks to get from one part of the country to another and were replaced with more paper.

There was a " boom," i.e. the market value of land measured in " money " rose beyond all possibility of yield, exactly as industrial shares rose in market value in U.S.A. 1928, not from worth of yield, product, or anything else save the chance of selling the paper quick to some other sucker at a higher price.

The same excitement, " optimism," Sat-Eve-Post-ism, slogans of Wall Street, same short-sight *re* essentials such as impossibility that land would yield without being worked, impossibility of delivering produce at a distance without means of communication—*vide* England in Africa, post-war, encouragement of British suckers to GROW tobacco: lack of market 1930, as lack of transport 1830. But the same underlying equations, AND the same banking manœuvres.

Same variety of " statesman " yelling hurrah for high finance, either from muddleheadedness or in hope of immediate personal gain or advantage.

How far the general reader can be expected to analyse the facts I don't know. How far it is possible in any way to abbreviate Van Buren's evidence I don't know. He was one of the best court lawyers that the world has known, in cases now obscure in a " far " country, in the little city of Albany, etc., the patient but per-lucid style, the orderly grouping of his facts, probably worth a fortune as model and study to any young barrister with serious intentions, but the despair of anyone who

wants to " give the broad lines " or further to " simplify " the subject.

Perhaps the reader will take my " word " assuming that the proof can be found in Van's autobiography. (Report of the American Historical Association 1918 published Government Printing Offices, Washington, 1920.)

The Bank was milking the nation, the bank had at its disposal resources colossally outweighing any material resources controllable by President Jackson. These resources were used not only financially but politically. The American treasury was dependent on the Bank, as is the British Treasury now on the Bank of England.

The colossal percentage of real power which is contained IN THE FINANCIAL POWER of the country was in the hands of *irresponsible persons*, largely in Mr. Biddle's, caring not one jot nor one tittle about the public weal. Possibly, in fact probably, excited by the idea of profits for himself and his shareholders. But void utterly of the great imagination, or the great moral ambition, which leads men to desire a true relation between the fact and the financial representation of the fact, i.e. as a first step toward economic justice, which latter is no more impossible or inconceivable than the just functioning of machines in a power-house.

Take note that we are a hundred years further on. We have had a century's experience in the precisions of machinery. A lot of people in Van's day still believed in the divine right of kings, they still believed that the Prince of Wales or Wurtemberg was " better " than Mr. Tyler or Signor Marconi. They were used to having Dukes and Earls enjoying one set of laws while John, Bob and Henry had to get along with a different set. England was still

hanging for theft of a sheep during the first part of Van's lifetime. No peers suffered the penalty. What I mean is that the objection to disproportionate legal privilege was no more ingrained then, than objection to disproportionate financial privilege is ingrained in our time.

Nevertheless the people did vote out the Bank. " Van " as president had to bear the whole weight of the deflation, Tyler was man enough not to give way.

The treasury was made free, and remained so till the slithering Wilson erected a " board." Naturally the banking power at once set out to find other ways of *de facto* government.

And their ways are marked on the chart of recurrent " panics " with all the fancy mathematics to prove and predict 'em.

But C. H. Douglas' suggestions of democratic control of credit or the suggestion that members of both Houses should at least sit in, or be present at, meetings of the Federal Control Board cannot be regarded as revolutionary, or lacking a precedent. They would be a return to the *de facto* status of the First Bank of U.S. in the time of President Washington.

Such suggestions are an annoyance only on the theory that members and senators on that board might ultimately represent the welfare of the people composing the nation.

XXXII

PARTY

I KNOW we have a " two-party system " and Russia and Italy have a one-party system, but Jefferson governed for twenty-four years in a *de facto* one-party condition. Quincy Adams did NOT represent return to federalism and the one party (Jeffersonian) continued through the twelve years of Jackson—Van Buren.

I offer the hypothesis that: When a single mind is sufficiently ahead of the mass a one-party system is bound to *occur as actuality* whatever the details of form in administration.

Secondly, when a corrupt oligarchy of any nature controls a country, they will very probably set up *in theory* a two-party system, controlling both of these parties, one of which will be " solid and conservative " and the other as silly as possible. You will hear of the " swing of the pendulum," and of going out of office in times of difficulty in order to let the other side get the " blame " or the " unpopularity."

One might speculate as to how far any great constructive activity CAN occur save under a *de facto* one-party system.

In times of great *de facto* change in material conditions, how likely or necessarily is a *de facto* one-party state to occur?

As I write this (February 1933) the fascist govern-

ment has taken the lead over others in Europe and America, recommending that where factories need less work they reduce the number of hours per day either for all or for special sets of men, rather than reduce the number of men employed.

AND that instead of overtime for men already on the pay-roll, they take on yet more employees.

This will not content the Douglasites nor do I believe that Douglas' credit proposals can permanently be refused or refuted, but given the possibilities of intelligence against prejudice in the year XI of the fascist era, what other government has got any further, or shows any corresponding interest in or care for the workers?

Ah, yes, Rhoosia! Mais voui.

IN CONCLUSION

THE fascist revolution was FOR the preservation of certain liberties and FOR the maintenance of a certain level of culture, certain standards of living, it was NOT a refusal to come down to a level of riches or poverty, but a refusal to surrender certain immaterial prerogatives, a refusal to surrender a great slice of the cultural heritage.

The " cultural heritage " as fountain of value in Douglas' economics is in process of superseding labour as the fountain of values, which it WAS in the time of Marx, or at any rate was in overwhelming proportion.

It is possible that all other revolutions have occurred only after, that is, very considerably AFTER a change in material conditions, and that the *rivoluzione continua* of Mussolini is the first revolution occurring simultaneously with the change in material bases of life.

As for a spread of fascism, if it could mean a transportation of the interesting element of the decade, it would not need parades, nor hysterical Hitlerian yawping. The would-be fascists would have to make a dispassionate analysis of fascism on the hoof, the *rivoluzione continua* as it has been for over a decade, its main trend, its meaning; and they would profit by such study in considering what elements can be used in either England or America, the general sanity and not the local accidentals, not the advisabilities of particular time and place but

the permanent elements of sane and responsible government.

Towards which I assert again my own firm belief that the Duce will stand not with despots and the lovers of power but with the lovers of

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POSTSCRIPT OR VALEDICTION, on going to press over two years after writing. These things being so, is it to be supposed that Mussolini has regenerated Italy, merely for the sake of reinfecting her with the black death of the capitalist monetary system?

EZRA POUND

JEFFERSON AND/OR MUSSOLINI

Ezra Pound's admiration of Mussolini's fascist regime in Italy has been well documented. As a result of propaganda broadcasts for *Il Duce's* government during World War II, he was arrested by the U.S. Army in 1945 and returned to the United States for trial. Declared insane and mentally unfit to stand trial, he was committed to St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D.C., where he remained until his release in 1958. He then returned to Italy, where he presently resides.

In characteristically aggressive style, *Jefferson and/or Mussolini* (written in 1933) advanced Pound's doctrinaire thesis that Jeffersonian political tradition was alive, not in Massachusetts, Virginia or Delaware, but in Mussolini's Italy. Ill-founded as some may consider it to be, Pound's comparison of Jefferson and Mussolini reveals traits of mind and personality common to both with a similar ability to get things done.

That Pound—then at the height of his great poetic powers—was moved to write this book is indeed revealing of the man behind the poetry. *Jefferson and/or Mussolini* provides us with an important key to unlocking the mystery of a profound mind.

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This book is being reissued under a contract which was executed in 1935 and does not necessarily reflect Ezra Pound's present views.